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REV. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A.

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IS FAITH DECAYING?*

It would be interesting and curious to follow the story of the various books which have appeared even in the present generation, that were finally to dispose of the claims of Christianity to be regarded as the universal and eternal religion. Defenders of the gospel have grown so accustomed to the confident boasts with which these various attacks have been heralded, that they can receive with comparative equanimity the announcement made by one of the leading organs of literature that Mr. Cotter Morison's new book "is the most powerful attack on Christianity that has been produced in England during this generation." The completion of his plan appears, unfortunately, to have been interrupted by the failure of the author's health, or we should have had also a full sketch of the religion which is to take the place of that old faith whose claims our author is supposed to have exploded. The task which he has imposed on himself is, as would be confessed by every candid mind, an extremely formidable one. It may please the members of literary or scientific coteries to assume that the religion which has not approved itself to their understandings cannot be worthy the acceptance of intelligent men, and that those who still believe in it must therefore be of a lower intellectual type, which is destined to speedy extinction. But there have been, and there still are, in the army of faith, men whose pretensions

* *The Service of Man. An Essay towards the Religion of the Future.* By JAMES COTTER MORISON. (Kegan Paul, Trench and Co.)

are not to be thus lightly set aside. Despite all the real or affected scorn with which some look down upon Christianity and its professors—a scorn which doubtless imposes upon a certain class, especially of those who desire to be thought intellectual, and find that the easiest way to the attainment of their end is to ape the tone of scholars and scientists—no candid man, however sceptical his own tendencies, will deny that the religion of Jesus Christ has a hold upon the minds and hearts of men of which it will not easily be deprived.

Christianity has survived many attacks, and will survive many more. It was too strong for its enemies in the days of its infancy, and it will not easily be crushed now that it has the gathered force of centuries behind it. It has grown to its present strength in defiance of all calculations, and in opposition to all probabilities. Its whole life has been one of struggle, but it has become all the stronger because of the conflicts through which it has had to pass. It has often seemed to be cast down, but so far from being destroyed has been, if possible, more wonderful in its resurrections even than in its early developments. To-day it can lift up its head in the presence of all its foes, and point to innumerable evidences of a vitality which seems to flourish in eternal youth. When a new assailant undertakes not only to dislodge it, but to substitute another faith in its place, we naturally inquire as to his qualifications for the work. The only answer we get from his eulogist is that there is a "sweep of historic imagination which characterizes Mr. Morison's works, this as much as the classic monographs on St. Bernard and Gibbon." As we write this remarkable sentence we cannot but be reminded of that "literary log-rolling" of which we have recently heard so much. We agree with Mr. Andrew Lang that it is not a very heinous offence for a man to think too partially and so write too favourably of the works of a literary friend. In truth, we do not envy one who can absolutely dismiss all kindly feeling when passing judgment on the work of his own companion and intimate. But he must not expect the world to adopt his opinion. So we do not complain of

the note of friendly exaggeration in the reviewer's estimate. We only subject it to fair discount. We have no wish to depreciate the value of Mr. Cotter Morison's works, but when we read of the "classic monographs on St. Bernard and Gibbon" we feel that the praise is pitched in so high a key that we shall do well to exercise a wise caution in accepting the critic's judgment as to the strength of his author's determined onslaught on the religion of Christ. Remembering the strength of the forces which have shattered themselves in their attacks on the impregnable defences of Christianity, this flourish of trumpets only provokes a smile. The man who is to succeed where many a great intellect has failed, must have some other qualification than a sweep of historic imagination. It is one thing to write classic monographs, another and very different one to overthrow the faith which has survived the attacks of Greek philosophers, English Deists, and French encyclopædists. But, in fact, there are some very significant admissions of the reviewer's own which indicate that even he himself is very doubtful as to the effect of this "most powerful attack on Christianity." There is a profound and deserved admiration for the writer's genius and a strong sympathy with the man in the loss of health which has baffled his purposes and compelled him to leave his work incomplete, and if it be that "his latest book and most ambitious production comes to us with the testamentary solemnity of last words," there is a pathos about the book which may naturally touch the heart of a friend. All the more remarkable therefore is the following testimony to the practical failure of his work.

It may be objected that science may give the material, but what will give the motive power? The forces of the heart are here of infinitely more importance than the forces of the mind, to which Mr. Morison, with scholarly one-sidedness, attributes so much power. It is in this over-estimate of the intellect and under-estimate of the emotional side of human nature that the fundamental fallacy of Mr. Morison's argument is to be found, and also in all probability the secret of his revolt against Christianity. There is not much likelihood that the mass of mankind will be at all eager to abandon their present religion for the gospel that Mr. Morison appears prepared to offer them in its stead.

Not the less does the attack itself deserve careful study, and even the Christian who has the keenest sense of the impotence of the attempt to dislodge the gospel from its place in the thoughts and affections of those who believe in it may yet find in it much suggestion by which they may profit. Mr. Cotter Morison is not an assailant to be despised or ignored, even if he is not to be greatly feared. He is no irreverent blasphemer or reckless iconoclast. He is almost as far removed from the rude Deist of the eighteenth century, or the daring Atheist of our own, as he is from a large number of orthodox professors who are very zealous for the truth, to which they yield no living obedience. Whatever verdict may be passed upon the teachings of his book there can be no doubt as to the ability with which it is written, or to the spirit in which it is conceived. We cannot say that the author has shown any true insight in the conception which he has formed of Christianity, but he has undoubtedly taken a broad and comprehensive view of the history of the Church, and especially of that part of it which arrogates to itself the title of Catholic, and the indictment which he has prepared against it, and consequently against the religion of which it is assumed to be the representative is sufficiently formidable. That a man of his temper should be shocked by the immoralities and inconsistencies which he exposes with such scathing severity is only natural. The marvel is only that a critic in whom there is so much fairness of spirit has failed to perceive that there is another side to the subject, which must be taken into account if any sound estimate is to be formed of the claims of Christianity to the faith of men.

The argument starts with a quiet assumption that faith is declining, and that the decay is most conspicuous in men of culture. This is a practice which has only become too common in our controversies, political, ecclesiastical, religious. It is, after all, a very simple device, and it has this advantage, that it gratifies him who employs it, and for the time at least serves to confound him against whom it is directed. It has, however, this unfortunate defect, that every one except the advocate who has recourse

to it laughs at its self-complacency, and regards it as a sign of argumentative weakness. A friend was talking with a minister who had succeeded in almost emptying his church, and condoling with him on the paucity of his congregation. "Ah!" was the reply, "it is not the best preachers who attract large congregations. Poor —— he was one of the finest spirits of the day, but, though he preached with such rare beauty and power, he could never get people to hear him." It is very soothing to our vanity, if we have the misfortune to fail, to believe that the reason is because we belong to a select company of choice spirits whom the vulgar herd are unable to appreciate. It may be so, but the failure is not the proof of it. Such a suggestion is dismissed with a smile as ludicrous, when used by a man in relation to himself, and in explanation of his own position; but it has a different aspect when the assumption is made in support of some principle or cause. At present we are threatened with a tyranny of superior persons, who regard dissent from their opinions as a sign of defective intelligence, if not of faltering honesty.

Nowhere is it more unseemly and yet nowhere is it more common than among the assailants of the Christian faith. We do not suppose that Mr. Cotter Morison means to be offensive. There is in him nothing of the supercilious tone in which Matthew Arnold delights, and by which he amuses almost as much as he provokes those whom he attacks. But there is precisely the same assumption that the intellect of the world has abandoned, or is rapidly abandoning, the religion of Christ. The "Decay of Belief" is the subject of the chapter which follows the introduction.

That the world, in its cultivated portions (we are told) has reached one of those great turning-points in the evolution of thought, which mark the close of an old epoch and the opening of a new era, will hardly be disputed by any well-informed person. The system of Christian theology and thought which arose out of the ruins of the Roman Empire has been gradually undermined, and its authority so shaken that its future survival is rather an object of pious hope than of reasoned judgment (p. 9).

This statement taken alone is somewhat vague and ex-

tremely misleading. The system "which arose out of the ruins of the Roman Empire" was not the Christian faith for which we are prepared to contend; but the whole of the argument shows that our author so regards it. He confounds Christianity with the human systems which have sought to express it, and writes as though the decay of the one meant the death of the other. There could be no greater fallacy.

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be.

But the gospel is like its Author, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." This is what our author forgets. The faith which he tells us has been undermined and which in the view of every "well-informed person" is in a state of decay, which threatens its speedy dissolution, is faith in Revelation and the supernatural, and, in truth, faith in God Himself. Indeed, "reasoned judgment" has ceased to hope for its survival, and if there are some intelligent people who still cling to so vain an expectation, that is to be explained by something in their education or surroundings. After adducing some of the phenomena evolutionists rely on in support of their theory — phenomena with which the world is now perfectly familiar, but which in the judgment of numbers fail to lift the theory out of the region of hypothesis into that of scientific demonstration — he adds

That facts of this nature, which have only been a short time before the world, should fail to convince theologians brought up in a completely different order of ideas, is in no wise surprising. The due weight of facts will no more be allowed than the due weight of arguments by minds which habit and education, and perhaps even a sense of duty, have combined to bias against them. But the effect on the younger and succeeding generations is very great, and already perceptible (p. 23).

This style of representation is doubtless very effective, and may produce considerable impression on young people, flattered by the suggestion that they may walk in the light and liberty of a new truth, hidden from their fathers by

reason of their theological prejudice. But, after all, it is not fair controversy, and is not calculated to help in an honest search after truth. We challenge the initial assertion that there is a decay of faith. It is so perpetually repeated that we doubt not that it is believed by those who make it. Such belief, indeed, is not difficult when there is an underlying assumption that it must be true; since it is impossible that men who have learned the new truth of Science can hold fast by the Evangelical creed. "You believe in the Incarnation and Atonement," said a literary friend of this school to us, with an expression of astonishment, passing on almost to incredulity, "and Sir John Lubbock has taught us that there are seventy-five millions of worlds." It did not seem to occur to the speaker, dazzled by the discoveries of Science, that there might be a faith in God's wondrous love which remained unshaken even by these new revelations of His power. The heart which has bowed before the mystery of the Infinite Love, and found its rest there, will not be shaken in its trust by learning the vastness of the empire over which that Love rules. The scientific mind may be quite as one-sided as the theological, and so to one who has been impressed by the marvels of science was unable to conceive of a witness to the truth, whose evidence is entirely unaffected by Sir John Lubbock and his millions of worlds. So there are men who think that Christianity is incredible under the new conditions to which science has introduced, and they pass rapidly to the conclusion that those who do not agree with them are the victims of bad training, strong prejudice, or (this must be introduced in order to soften the harshness of the verdict) a "sense of duty." That certainly must be a strange "sense of duty" which compels a man who is nothing if he be not a servant of the truth to shut his eyes to facts.

But whatever the cause, it is at least curious that, despite this incessant declamation about the "decay of belief," the gospel is giving extraordinary evidences of its vitality. In truth, if we are to judge from some indications, there is at least as much danger of a revival of superstition as of a

triumph of unbelief. A well-known evening paper recently called attention to the extraordinary increase in the power of the Papacy. It is not long since there were confident predictions of its final overthrow; but the Pope, who was then regarded as the representative of an effete tradition, has once more become a factor in the politics of Europe. The journalist's picture was marked by characteristic exaggeration, but nevertheless there is in it an element of truth. The force of Rome is potent even in Germany where Rationalism has its throne, and the mighty Bismarck does not disdain the helping hand it so graciously stretches out to his assistance. It would be but a sorry achievement for the scepticism of the day if the one result of its undermining an intelligent faith was to force it, in sheer despair, to take refuge in absolute submission to authority.

Happily the signs of increased life and vigour are more numerous among the Protestant communities than in the Romish Church. Church systems are being shaken to their centre, old creeds are being extensively modified, there are evidences of change and even of revolution everywhere. But amid them all the faith in the Christ and His salvation becomes stronger and more active. It may seem strange that there should be so wide a difference on a question of fact, and it may be supposed that it is due either to prejudice on one side or the other, if not on both, or to a common tendency to judge from a narrow and one-sided observation. But closer examination may show that the difference is not so impossible of reconciliation as might at first appear. Undoubtedly both parties may be too largely influenced by the opinions of their own circle, and there is this to be said for those who take our author's view, that probably the avowal of positive unbelief is more frequent and more unblushing than it was, say a quarter of a century ago. We are continually told that in society there is an increasing contempt for creeds and churches, and, of course, that this is specially marked in scientific circles. But is this conclusive evidence of a decay of faith? It is proof of the existence of a more aggressive and audacious unbelief, but before we can accept the one as identical

with a positive decay of faith we must inquire as to the actual character of this revolt. Is it a revolt of men who were once possessed by the living power of Christianity, and have cast it off because they have been convinced that the religion of Christ has no authority? If that were so, it would be a serious loss indeed, but if the militant scepticism of the present generation has only taken the place of the formal assent in which there was no touch of true faith in the past, the change is not alarming. It was the fashion once to show a certain outward deference to Christianity. It may be as much the fashion now to assume the air and use the language of Agnosticism. Christianity gained nothing from the one. We doubt whether it will be greatly injured by the other. The bitter hostility or the arrogant contempt, sometimes paraded with no little ostentation, may be harder to bear, and certainly gives an impression of a more uncompromising opposition. But may not this very intensity of antagonism be indicative of secret dissatisfaction with the present unrest, and is there not more to hope from this discontent than from the settled indifference which accepts orthodoxy because it does not think it worth examination or discussion? It seems hard for many to recognize the worthlessness of a profession of belief behind which there is no real faith, and to this we owe the anxiety of friends, and the jubilant tone of the enemies of the gospel in relation to a change which has much less real significance than is ascribed to it by either party. The world is not going away from Christ, for the simple reason that it was never with Him, while the active enmity of some who would once have assumed a show of friendship has stimulated those who believe in Him to a more single faith and a more ardent devotion. The Church of to-day may have many faults, but not since the first days has it been possessed by a more passionate loyalty to its Lord, or shown a more buoyant and hopeful energy in the extension of His kingdom.

When an assault upon Christianity is described in the terms which we quoted at the commencement of our article, we are naturally led to expect that our defences will have to

stand the fire of some new and terrible artillery. But any new battery Mr. Cotter Morison has unmasked is not formidable. The most serious attack in his book is that in the early chapter, in which he directs the arguments of science and criticism against the gospel. When he passes on to reasoning which may be regarded as distinctively his own, there is nothing which need at all disturb the most nervous believer. On the contrary we may rather be encouraged by the fact that one evidently so anxious to do his worst against the religion of Christ has thought it necessary to supplement the attacks of scientists and others by a new and entirely original and independent action of his own, and that this is all he has been able to effect.

In general, his argument may be described as a challenge to Christianity on the practical side, and if it could have been made good, a serious breach would have been made in the defence. The man who can answer such books as Mr. Brace's "*Gesta Christi*," or Dr. Storr's striking chapters in his argument for the "*Divine Origin of Christianity*," will certainly make a very important and very necessary contribution to the attack. Mr. Cotter Morison has not done it—has not even attempted to do it. One of his points is, "*That the morality of the ages of faith was very low; and that the further we go back in the times when belief was strongest, the worse it is found to be.*" It is manifest that very much depends here on the interpretation of the phrase, "*ages of faith*," and "*the times when belief was strongest.*" On this point our author has ideas of his own, which would certainly be rejected by a large number of the most intelligent and earnest defenders of the gospel. The "*ages of faith*" they regard rather as ages of superstition. They refuse to confound faith in Christ with faith in the Church, faith in the priest, faith in the sacraments, and would naturally decline to argue at all with any one who should insist on regarding the morality of the days when Sacerdotalism was supreme as a product of Christian faith. Mr. Cotter Morison, however, does not even stop here. There are those who would insist that the mediæval times were "*ages of faith*," and there may be some show of reason

in support of the position. Far be it from us to deny that there were even amid the corruptions of doctrine, the formalisms and superstitions of priest-craft by which the gospel was obscured — some whom the true Light lighted, and whose lives were examples of self-denying consecration. But as much can hardly be said for some of the periods which our author has singled out for examination.

And it is noteworthy that in proportion as we recede backward from the present age and return into the Ages of Faith, we find that the crime and the sin become denser and blacker. The temperature of faith rises steadily as we penetrate into the past, almost with the regularity which marks the rise of the physical temperature of the air as we descend into a deep mine; but a neglect and defiance of morality are found to ascend in a corresponding ratio. This, it must be owned, is an anomalous result if morality be indeed so dependent on Christianity as is commonly supposed. When all men believed and doubted not, we should have found, according to the Christian hypothesis, a godly world; devout people living always with the great Day of Judgment before their eyes, crushing down the lusts of the flesh in view of the tremendous penalties prepared for those who indulged them. But we find nothing of the kind. On the contrary, we find a state of things to which our imaginations are scarcely able to do justice in these comparatively tame and moral days. A progressive movement has taken place in men's conduct, both public and private, but it has coincided not with an increase, but with a decay, of faith. This, beyond any question, is the most moral age which the world has seen; and it is as certainly the least believing age since Christianity became the religion of the West. The inference is plain, that Christianity has not been so favourable to morality as is usually assumed (pp. 118, 119).

Following out this idea, Mr. Cotter Morison singles out the period of the Regency and the reign of Queen Anne in this country and the age of Louis XIV. in France as "Ages of Faith," and, as may be supposed, has a very easy task in showing that these were also "ages of crime, of gross and scandalous wickedness, of cruelty, and, in a word, of immorality." His difficulty will be to find any impartial person who will accept his definition of these periods as "ages of faith." To talk of "the drinking, gambling, prize-fighting, cock-fighting, bull-baiting England of the Regency" as though it were a peculiarly religious England, and as

though there had subsequently been a loss of the faith which was then so conspicuous, is sheer trifling, and worse than trifling. With strange inconsistency indeed, he tells us "signs are not wanting that the *present anarchy in thought is leading to anarchy in morals*. Numbers who have put off belief in God have not put on belief in Humanity." [We may add, it is pretty certain that they never will, and that it would have no permanent moral influence if they did.] This sentence must have been written in a more sober frame of mind than his chapter on "Morality in the Ages of Faith," to which it is practically an answer. But the truth is, what we want first of all is a clear definition, and to that point we shall come in another paper.

There is in fact something so closely approaching the grotesque in the suggestion that the early part of the eighteenth century in this country was an age of faith, that the difficulty is to understand that it can have been seriously intended. The howling mobs who were roused to frenzy by the passionate preaching of Dr. Sacheverell would, we fancy, have been regarded as strange specimens of Christians, even by the Tories who were using them as the instruments of their factious politics, and were content to climb to power by their deeds of insensate bigotry. It may be a reproach on Christianity, it certainly is a reproach on some of its teachers, that the people should have been nurtured in the delusion that they were in any sense doing the will of God, or that their violence and passion bore any resemblance to religion. But the gospel of Christ may at all events claim to be judged by its own teachings, and not by the misrepresentations given of it by the priest-craft or state-craft which has used it as an instrument for the attainment of its own selfish ends. The degradation which selfishness and sin have been able to inflict upon the Divine ideal is sad enough to contemplate, but the wonderful power which Christianity has shown of purging itself from these corruptions is more marvellous still. We must say that despite our admiration of much in Mr. Cotter Morison's book, and especially of the earnestness of spirit which is manifest in his dealings with the ques-

tions of the hour, we are simply puzzled to understand how he can have supposed that the argument which he has so elaborately constructed as to the influence of Christian faith on morals could produce any impression on any candid minds. The "sweep of the historic imagination" may be very impressive, but we could have sacrificed it all for a dispassionate examination of the principles of Christian ethics, and their bearing on human conduct. Our author believes that the religion of the future is to be employed in the service of man. But the great lesson of the gospel itself is, that in the wise service of man is the purest and noblest service that can be rendered to God. Its teaching is that our love to the God whom we have not seen is to be shown by our love to the brother whom we have seen. What nobler lesson as to its duty to humanity can the world ever learn? How will the sense of that duty ever be maintained if that great lesson be set aside or forgotten? To these points we shall return in another article.

BYGONE DAYS IN BEDFORDSHIRE.

II.—THE ABBESS AND NUNS OF ELSTOW.

ELSTOW village by Bedford town has become world-famous as the birth-place of John Bunyan, and to it as to his special shrine many lovers of his "Pilgrim" still turn their steps. But even in his time there was an air of remote antiquity about the place, and many links remaining between the existing present and a far-off historic past. Long even before the Conquest there was a Saxon church there, dedicated to that St. Helen who was the mother of Constantine the Great, and from whom, indeed, the village took its name; for Elstow or Elnestowe is simply a shortened form of Helenstow, the *stow* or place of St. Helen. Then again, from the Conquest to the Reformation, or for nearly five hundred years, the one overshadowing and all-controlling fact of Elstow village life was the Benedictine Abbey, founded there in 1078 by the Countess Judith, who was the Conqueror's niece. This had only

ceased to exist as one of the great religious houses some ninety years before Bunyan was born ; indeed little more than seventy years had passed by since the Abbey had been handed over to the grantee, to be dealt with as he liked. The dismantled ruins of the Norman choir, tower, and transept of the Abbey Church to the east, and the delightful little chapter-house and shattered cloisters to the west, were among the earliest associations of the Dreamer's childhood. The high place in Elstow Church which, as he says, he " adored, and that with great devotion," was really the truncated nave of the church of the monastery where the choir of nuns had kept vigil for centuries ; and as he listened to the sermons of John Kellie or Christopher Hall, the vicars of his time, there lay buried beneath his feet some of the long line of abbesses who had ruled in the past, bright effigies in brass on the black marble pavement recalling their memory, in some confused fashion, to the wondering lad. These personal associations of Bunyan's early life may, for some people, lend interest to the old abbey itself. Readers there may be not indisposed to wander about the place in leisurely fashion, recalling its past and gathering up such scattered gleams of its history as may chance to remain to us.

The Abbey of Elstow, it has been already said, was founded by Judith, niece of the great Conqueror, and wife of Waltheof, the English Earl of Huntingdon. It was broadly hinted at the time that this, which seemed so pious a work, was really only a vain attempt to pacify a troubled conscience and make atonement for an unwomanly crime. For it was her betrayal which, three years before, had led to the judicial murder of her own husband, whose execution has been described as the greatest crime and at the same time the greatest blunder of the Conqueror's life. A "second Herodias," or "Job's wife," as the Anglo-Norman Chronicle calls her, she betrayed Waltheof to his death, and, as the people believed, never knew peace again. It was probably this belief that gave rise to the ghost story of the village, and led Elstow gossips to talk with mysterious awe of a lady in white who, century after century,

haunted the precincts of the monastery, or flitted across the village green,

Muttering her prayer
To the midnight air,
And her mass for the days that are gone.

But whatever the motive of its foundation, the Abbey of Elstow rose to wealth and importance, and the Abbess at its head came to be a somewhat formidable person. We think of a convent as a place where devout souls spent their lives in meditation and worship, their great aim being to have as little as possible to do with this world and so fit themselves for the next. But while, as we may hope, thus fitting herself for a better world, each succeeding Abbess seems to have had a good deal to do with this. She possessed large powers over the villagers without, as well as over the sisters within, the monastic boundary. She held Court and View of Frank-pledge twice a year, at which she received suit and fealty from the soemen for their lands; she had her cucking-stool by which, under sentence of her Court, there were ducked three times, in some muddy pool, such brewers or bakers of Elstow as broke the assize of beer and bread; and, strangest of all to our notions, she had her gallows, on what was known as the gallows baulk, for more serious offenders, over whom she had power of life and death. In other words, she was the local magistrate with powers as large as those of judges of assize. In 1287 the then Abbess of Elstow appeared by counsel at Westminster to support her claim as against the Crown to all the privileges attaching to the monastic property in Bedfordshire. The document setting forth this claim is curious, and one or two sentences from it, as showing how all-embracing was ecclesiastical rule even in the hands of a woman, may not be without interest. It runs thus:—

“The Abbess of Elnestowe came by her attorney before the justices by writ, and claimed View of Frank-pledge of her men in her villis, and claimed weyf”—that is, right to the forfeited goods of felons—“and certain exemptions and a fair in the vill of Elnestowe once in the year, and warren in her lands.

"And she says that the whole vill of Elnestowe is of her fee, and that she has there gallows [*furcas*] and other means of executing justice. . . . And she says that she holds her Court [*visum*] over all who dwell in her fee of Elnestowe, Wilshamstude and Kemeston, and that she holds another Court at Maldone twice in the year, and [that] without [the presence of] a king's officer. . . . And she says that no one of her fee comes to the Sheriff's Court, and she takes fines of assize of malt [*fractæ cervisie*] and proves measures and takes fines and holds the standard of the Marshal of the Lord King, and has a cucking-stool [*tumberellum*] at Maldone." Elsewhere also she says that at Elstow she has gallows, a pillory, and cucking-stool, and there holds pleas of the Crown; and great as were these powers it may be noted that they did not exceed those of the Prior of Dunstable, who held his Courts and had two gaols and the gallows at his command.

* These large powers of the Abbess were sustained by what in those days was considerable wealth. The foundress had been generous to begin with. In dividing the spoils of the Conquest among his retainers and kindred, the king gave to this niece of his landed possessions in no fewer than nine English counties. In Bedfordshire alone she had assigned to her nine complete manors, besides extensive lands in nineteen other parishes. Out of these numerous spoils she endowed the new monastery which she had founded with the two manors of Elstow and Wilstead, together with five hides of land at Maulden. These lands were added to century after century until, at the Reformation, there were no fewer than ninety-four separate items of property, amounting in total annual value of temporalities and spiritualities to £325—no small sum when, as one of the abbesses tells us, the annual rental value of arable land was sixpence an acre, of pasture twelpence, and of meadow land two shillings and fourpence.

The origin of much of this wealth is curious to trace. All was fish that came to the monastic net. By charter from the king the Abbey had even the right to the tolls

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taken at Elstow fair; and how miscellaneous were other sources of income may be seen from the deed of surrender at the Reformation, which is still in existence at the Record Office. By this deed the Lady Elizabeth, Abbess of the Monastery, and the last of the line, handed over to the Crown, August 26, 1539: "Manors, houses, messuages, gardens, curtilages, tofts, lands and tenements, meadows, grazing grounds, pastures, woods, underwoods, rents, revisions, services, mills, ferries, knights' fees, wards, marriages, born serfs and villanes with the issues of the same, commons, liberties, franchises, jurisdictions, courts, court leets, hundreds, views of frank-pledge, fairs, markets, parks, warren, fish-ponds, waters, fisheries, ways, roads, waste lands, advowsons, nominations, presentations and donations of churches, vicarages, chapelries, chantries, hospitals and other ecclesiastical benefices, rectories, vicarages, chantries, portions, pensions, annuities, tithes, oblations and all and singular our emoluments, profits, possessions, and rights, as well within the said county of Bedford as within the counties of Northampton, Lincoln, Leicester, Buckingham, Hertford, Essex, Norfolk, Gloucester, Huntingdon, and Oxford and elsewhere."

The reasons which led the faithful to enrich the monasteries were as various as the sources of income. For instance, it is somewhat amusing to find that Richard de Marisco, one of King John's profligate councillors, gave to the Abbey at St. Albans the tithes of Eglingham in Northumberland for the purpose of improving the quality of the monastic beer, "taking compassion upon the weakness of the convent's drink," as the chronicler tells us. Even when thus reinforced it still seems to have been scarcely robust enough in the opinion of some, for at subsequent periods the rectory of Norton in Hertfordshire, and two-thirds of the tithes of Hartburn in Northumberland, were given to the same monastery for the bettering of its beer. Other bequests had their origin not so much in a love of the good things of this world as in a lively fear of the possible evils of the next. In 1347, Thomas atte Brugge of Elstow gave to the Abbey of that place four

messuages, sixty-four acres of land, six acres of meadow and a rent of twelvecence with appurtenances, in Elstow, Kempston, and Wilshamstead, for the purpose of maintaining a chaplain to say mass daily for ever in the parish church of Elstow, for the soul of the said Thomas and for the souls of his father, his mother, his ancestors, and all the faithful departed. Nineteen years later, John Morteyn and others demised to the Abbey two messuages, one toft, fifty-nine acres of land, and a rent of 3s. 9d., for the purpose of keeping two wax candles burning before the high altar of the Abbey of Elstow for a certain time every Sunday for ever.

Other benefactions seem to have been of the nature of portions given with daughters who were entering the convent as nuns. In an *Inspeximus* Charter of the time of Edward III., there are these three entries relating to the Abbey: (1) Of the gift of Richard Langeote, two hides of land in Moulsoe, together with his daughter; (2) Of the gift of Ralph his son, three virgates in the same vill, together with his daughter; (3) Of the gift of Nigell of Stafford, ten and a half virgates of land in Erendesby, together with his daughter.

It is part of the popular belief that the monasteries of England had much to do with founding and sustaining many of the parish churches. The real truth seems to be that they did more in the way of robbing them than in sustaining them. Every vicarage in England represents a case of spoliation where the rectorial tithes had been handed over to some religious house, the parish priest being left to depend upon the vicarial or lesser tithes. In the case of Elstow, for example, the temporalities of the Abbey, that is to say the proceeds of lands, houses, mills, and the like, amounted only to £140 a year, while the spiritualities amounted to as much as £185 a year, these being derived from the tithes of different parishes, which for various reasons had been assigned to the monastery instead of to the churches of the parishes themselves. For while the law of the land enforced the payment of tithe, it left to the landlord the right of determining the

direction in which the tithe should be distributed. There was no choice about the payment of the tithe—that must be paid; but within certain limits there was a choice as to its destination. And for various reasons it was to the interest of the landholding gentry to be on good terms with the great religious houses, for they could further the interests of their families in life and say masses for their souls after death. Thus these grants were not *to* the parish church, but *from* it; they were really alienations of tithe from the parishes where the tithe was paid. The grants of tithe to churches was not by deed but by law; on the contrary, the grants of tithe to monastic houses was not by law but by deed. In this way the Abbey of Elstow reckoned among its spiritualities the great tithes of no fewer than ten rectories. And what is worse still, the Abbess sometimes demanded a further payment from the already impoverished vicar as a condition of his being presented to the living. For instance, according to the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, the Abbey of Elstow received from the great tithes of the rectory of Hitchin the sum of £66 13s. 4d., and in addition a further sum of £2 13s. 4d. from the vicar, who was put into the living by the monastery to do the work. Then besides receiving all the great tithes of these ten rectories, the Abbey received also portions of the tithe from fifteen other parishes in various counties.

When referring to these matters it may be worth while to say that there are known facts in relation to the Abbey of Elstow, pointing to the conclusion, that even before the Reformation, when the English Church was still subject to the See of Rome, the Crown exercised supreme control of the property of the monastery. That property was secured by charter from the Crown; the death or resignation of an abbess was at once reported to the King; no successor could be appointed without his license first sought and obtained; and in the interval the temporalities went to the Crown. In 1250 the following letter was addressed to the King:—"His servants Isilia, Prioress of Elnestowe, and the nuns of the same place, greeting, throwing themselves at his feet with all reverence and

honour. Since by the resignation of our beloved mother, Agnes of Westbury, late Abbess of our House, our Abbey is declared to be vacant, we send to your Lordship, Sarra de la Rokele, and Cecilia of Chiselhampton, our fellow-sisters, bearers of the presents, to seek from your serenity license to elect unto us an Abbess, &c." (Royal Letters, No. 547).

The same thing occurred again in 1278, with this difference, that in this case there was evidently strife in that serene atmosphere, wraths in those celestial minds—in other words, all the fire and fervour of a contested election. As before, the prioress and nuns sent two of their number to the King to announce the death of Lady Anora, by which they "are left destitute of the solace of an Abbess," and to seek leave to elect another. Leave was accordingly given, but on the day of election "the more in number elected the Lady Beatrice of Scoteny; others, the fewer in number, discordantly elected the Lady Agatha Giffard, prioress of the same house: and so each of these persons presented herself to the King for the purpose of obtaining, as was fitting, the royal assent." Agatha Giffard was the sister of the Archbishop of York, but as some years before there had been evil reports of her doings, she was eventually set aside and the election of the Lady Beatrice confirmed.

In 1409, on the election of the Lady Johanna Trayley as Abbess and *Pastrix*," the order of procedure was accurately set forth, which was this: The Prioress and convent sent intimation of the vacancy by death to the King, and asked leave to elect a successor; the King granted a *congé d'élire*; the Prioress and convent proceeded to elect; the King was then informed of the choice made, and requested to issue his mandate of institution to the Bishop; the Bishop instituted the lady elect; and then finally the temporalities were formally assigned by the Crown. It would seem that at every step the supremacy of the King and the national control of Church property through the King, were steadily insisted upon on the one side and as steadily recognized on the other.

The Chartulary, Court Roll of the Manor, Chronicle, and other records usually preserved in the Abbey itself, have long since been lost. What glimpses we get are from scattered papers preserved in London or at Lincoln. One of the latest of these is to be found among the Injunctions of John, Bishop Longland, which leaves the impression that the nuns of Elstow had not quite ceased to love the world they had vowed to leave. We are not to suppose, of course, that the convent was a mere assembly of devout women who gave their whole lives to religious contemplation and the chanting of psalms. The Abbess, as we have seen, must have had a good deal of practical work on her hands in managing her various courts and in settling the destiny of those who were sent to cucking-stool, the pillory, or the gallows; no small amount of labour and skill must have been required in keeping all the accounts of the various properties, in looking after the gardens and orchards, the dovecotes and fishponds, and in providing the clothing and needful commissariat for the sisterhood. It is probable also that the children of the neighbouring townfolk received from some of the sisters such book-learning as they were able to give; some indeed came from a distance to receive instruction. In the life of St. Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, we read that the Archbishop of Canterbury brought over from France, a little boy of five, Robert of Noyon, who on seeing St. Hugh "clung to him as to a father." The Bishop took the boy under his care, and "after a short time he sent him to be taught his letters at Alnestou."

But while from generation to generation the sisters mingled good and useful works with what we must regard as their superstitious usages, human nature within the monastery was very much like human nature everywhere else, and the strictness of Benedictine rule was not by any means always observed. When in 1530 Bishop Longland made a visitation of the Abbey, he seems to have used his eyes to some purpose, and from Woburn Abbey, which was his next halting-place, he sent a somewhat searching injunction "to our wel-beloued susters in charite the abbess

and covent of Vlneſtowe." There are, he ſays, diuerſe things "worthy reformacon." For one thing the rule was that the ſiſters ſhould "kepe the fratrie atte meale tymes where they ſhould be aſwell fedde ſpiritually with holy ſcripture as bodyly with meate," whereas "cuſtomably they reſorte to certayn places within the monaſterye called the houſholdes, where moche inſolney is uſe by reaſon of reſorte of ſeculars both men, women, and children." In other words, theſe ſiſters preferred to be where there were more lively goings-on than in the fratrie, variety of ſeculars from outside coming and going, with tales of village goſſip and flashes of village wit. Henceforth, ſays the Biſhop, there ſhalt be "built oonly oon place which ſhalbe called the myſericorde, where ſhalbe oon ſadde lady of the eldeſt ſorte ouerſeer and maiſtres to all the residue that thidre ſhall reſorte, whiche in nombre ſhall nott paſſe fyve att the uttermoost." He then enters upon a number of other requirements which are to be ſtrictly obſerved "undre payne of excommunicacon," and finally he ordains that none of the ſiſters ſhall "preſume to were ther apparells upon ther hedes undre ſuch lay faſhion as they haue now off late doon with cornered creſts nether undre ſuch manour of hight ſhewing ther forehedes moore like lay people than religious, butt that they uſe them without ſuche creſtes or ſecular faſhions, and off a lower ſorte and that ther vayle come as lowe as ther yye ledes." Further "noon of the ſaid religious ſuſters ſhall uſe or were here after eny ſuch voyded ſhoys, nether creſted as they haue of late ther uſed," "ther gownes and kirtells ſhall be cloſſe afore and nott ſoo depe voyded att the breſte and noo more to uſe rede ſtomachers but other ſadder colers in the ſame." This injunction was "Geven att our manor off Wooborn, the firſt daye of October in the yere of our lord god 1530," and was ſolemnly read by the Abbeſſ in the chapter-houſe before the whole convent. In leſſ than nine years after the reading of that injunction came the craſh of the Reformation. The monaſtery was ſuppreſſed, and the Abbeſſ and nuns, penſioned for life, were diſmiſſed to the great world beyond. Fourteen years later ſtill the

whole demesne was granted by the king to Sir Humphrey Radelyff, who took down the central tower, transept and choir; and the nave truncated became the parish church which Bunyan knew. So the old world vanished and the new era dawned.

Three hundred years have come and gone since then. Men's minds have widened with the process of the suns, and once more there is a sort of feeling in the air that we are on the eve of change. In what form and when the change may come no man may know. We can only pray that, come when and how it will, it may usher in a larger, freer church life for England than these centuries have known—a truer brotherhood of man, a wider unfolding of the kingdom of God!

JOHN BROWN.

WHY AM I A CONGREGATIONALIST?

II.

BY REV. CHARLES A. BERRY.

Two preliminary remarks will define the limits of the question as I understand it. In the first place, I am not asked for a catalogue and a justification of the negative attitudes which express my rejection of certain realized ecclesiasticisms. It is possible, sometimes it is necessary, to explain and defend one's Congregationalism by a sifting process of ecclesiastical renunciation. Out of my protestantism, my nonconformity, my dissent, I come at length into a free space for my Congregationalism. I arrive at election by rejection. But I am not, I take it, invited to pursue that method. I am asked for the constructive grounds of my attachment to the polity I accept. This is better. Great faiths and inspiring loyalties are not built up on destructive criticism. The ideas and the institutions which create enthusiasm are not those which are accepted provisionally as a refuge from past falsehoods and failures. The Church that would command attachment must have more to say for itself than it has to say against others. It

is the positive aspects of Congregationalism that I understand myself asked to supply.

In the second place, I do not feel called upon to chronicle any of those broad features of Congregationalism which are, either in part or in full, possessed by other Churches. Evangelicalism of doctrine, a prophetic and apostolic conception of the Christian ministry, an absolute reliance upon the voluntary support of the people—these, among others, are strong elements in Congregationalism which are essential to my attachment. But they cannot, happily, be called distinctive. They may therefore be passed over. Only special and peculiar characteristics call for mention. Within these limits will I say why I am a Congregationalist.

I. Because Congregationalism reduces to simplest mechanism the means of an adequate Evangelical purpose.

Congregationalism, in common with other Evangelical churches, possesses the ideal and the spirit of Christ's parting commission. It exists to serve men for Christ's sake. It is no close corporation of select souls. It is no spiritual society of the privileged few organized for purposes of mutual congratulation and admiration. It is an association of disciples who feel called to become apostles. Its credential is the gospel which it preaches. Its parish is the world which needs the gospel. Its aim is the conversion of every man to God, and the gathering of disciples into a fellowship of culture and service. In all these respects it stands at least in line with every Evangelical Church. The Churches which seek these ends by these means and in this spirit may justly claim to possess an adequate Evangelical purpose. In respect of these points all I claim for Congregationalism is that it is not behind others in the exaltation of its ideal and the consecration of its enthusiasm. But what attracts me to Congregationalism is, that in its devotion to this common purpose it combines efficiency of service with simplicity of mechanism. It gives itself to all the work of Christ, yet it is so simple an association that it may everywhere and rapidly and inexpensively be set in motion. "Where two or three are gathered

together in Christ's name" Congregationalism is founded, all the resources of Congregationalism are discovered. Such an association is a Church. It waits for no official constitution. It depends not upon the license of any superintendent committee. It has every resource of service and goes at once to its work. It makes, it is not made by, such officials as it possesses. It consecrates, it is not consecrated by, the machinery of its organized effort. The Master Himself is its President; the Master's Spirit its efficient inspiration and equipment.

Now I am disposed to attach the highest importance to this feature. Given a machine adequate to the work required, and its value is heightened in proportion to its simplicity. That is an axiom among machinists. The reason is obvious. Greater simplicity reduces the danger of complication, friction, breakdown. It means smaller cost, a more rapid multiplication of machines, a diminished strain upon and therefore a wider distribution of the motive power. From these advantages follow swifter and larger results. Attention, too, is less concentrated upon the means of production, is freer to consider the quality and style of the thing produced. Hence the ceaseless study of our engineers and mechanics to solve the problem of maximum capacity with minimum complexity.

These considerations seem to me to apply with even greater force to ecclesiastical machinery. Whatever in a Church adds to instrumental complexity without increase of spiritual efficiency involves an increase of possible danger, of probable complication, of positive limitation. There follows an unnecessary expenditure of resources in the mere maintenance and movement of the mechanism. There arise gratuitous difficulties in the way of rapidly multiplying and easily adapting the means of service. It is manifest, too, in the Church as in the factory, that an over-plus of instrumentality increases the points of possible dislocation and the risks of frictional over-heating. In addition to which there is a heightened temptation—always strong in organized religious societies—to think more of the means in operation than of the end to be achieved.

For these reasons it appears to me that a Church, for its distinct and specific purpose as a Church, is not enriched but impoverished by the intricate organization which may make it impressive as a work of constructive genius, but which unadapts it to simplest, safest, readiest service. And for these reasons I am a Congregationalist. That system does not erect a cumbrous and expensive series of cranes and pulleys to lift a 56 lb. weight, nor an awe-inspiring and multitudinous galaxy of officials and instrumentalities to raise and turn a man to God. It is efficient for Christ's purpose; it is simple and ready for immediate use.

II. Because Congregationalism offers every advantage of Christian association while emphasizing the rights and responsibilities of Christian individualism.

One of two opposite dangers has often threatened the robust growth of a Christian life. In not a few instances the fear of one of them has driven a man into the snare of the other. They are the Scylla and Charybdis of discipleship. At one extreme is the danger that a highly-wrought ecclesiastical society may injuriously overshadow the individual Christian man. At the other is the equivalent evil that a morbid and self-confident individualism may cut itself adrift from the social environment which is essential to Christian culture and vigorous piety. Congregationalism affords protection from both these evils. It is the realized paradox of associated individualism. It is a combination of personal responsibility with social advantages. It is distinctly individualistic, not only in heralding the personal character and the direct relation of the soul's obligations to God, but in identifying its societies absolutely with the members who compose them. It has no conception of a society which stands distinct from the men who form it. It never speaks of, and never suggests, a Church which has an indefinable entity of its own apart from associated Christian men. Its Church is the body of men who are linked in holy fellowship. *Its* life is the sum of *theirs*. *Its* responsibilities and services are *theirs*. *They* are it looked at in detail. It is the aggregate of which *they*

are the parts. Hence, amid all the association of Congregational Church life, the sense of individual freedom and responsibility is never lost. Not only is every soldier in the Congregational army personally enlisted, but he is made continuously to feel that upon his single faithfulness depends the success of the whole. Individualism, therefore, in its best sense, is nourished. The motive is supplied which impels to a full development of personal Christian life. As a matter of fact this is not so in the more organized Churches ; and it is diminished in proportion as the organization is increased. In them the organization is more or less independent of individuals. The Church comes to be regarded as having an entity to which the members only distantly contribute. *It* is something distinct from *them*. Hence a weakened sense of personal responsibility, and of personal growth by personal service. Hence, in the end, the reduction of religion to official performances and piety by proxy. Congregationalism, as against this evil, asserts the importance of every single disciple. It loudly claims that, as God has a name for every one of His children, so He has for each a place and a work under the commission of the gospel. It hands over to no convocation, synod, or conference the duties which create recognized responsibilities. It exalts every disciple into the sense of direct obligation. From first to last it saves the individualism of Christian life and service.

But what it thus saves at one extreme from paralysis it protects at the other from stagnation. Congregationalism recognizes a place and function for society. It calls individuals into association. By so much as it identifies the Church with its members it invites Christian men into fellowship. It is a protest and a provision against that sort of individualism which keeps piety a profound secret, which neither gets nor gives good in a free circle of like-minded men. If it disallows the despotism of a spiritual society in which the spiritual person remains unenfranchised, or is cared for only as a child in a maternal sort of way, it is only that out of redeemed units it may create a realer community of interest and service. The antithesis of

democracy is not society but aristocracy, plutocracy, or other such system of class government. The antithesis of Congregationalism is not Church fellowship, but such associations as stand distinct from the life and interests of the members. This point cannot be too strongly emphasized. Congregationalism is a *Christian fellowship*. It is a constructive spiritual socialism, not a disintegrating separatism. Within its borders men are linked in closest union for purposes of mutual culture and combined service. It supplies every advantage of Christian association; it protects the legitimate rights and responsibilities of Christian individuals.

III. Because Congregationalism combines fidelity to the gospel with faithfulness to God's broadening light.

In other words, while Congregationalism is grounded in assurance of the Evangelical message, it is unfettered by any scientific theological system. The gospel remains. Theologies change. The old message is eternally new because eternally true. Men's statements of it are at best mere temporary adaptations, and must change with the times. Congregationalism proceeds on the recognition of these two considerations. It brings forth out of its treasury things new and old. It rests upon the Evangelical facts, but it stands where the growing light of advancing day sheds latest and brightest lustre on their meaning. It is thus ancient as the gospel and modern as the piety and intelligence of the age. It respects and studies all theologies, but it binds itself finally to none. It is free to learn whatever will help it to teach the truth of Christ. It establishes loyalty upon liberty.

IV. It will be seen, that in briefly sketching some of the grounds of my Congregationalism, I have attached no importance to the fact that the New Testament Churches were Congregational. I am not insensible to this fact which is now so generally recognized. But I am far from believing that this fact is a conclusive and authoritative guide in the matter of Church constitution. That the Apostolic Churches were Congregational I believe. That they were so because that form was best adapted to the

service of the new faith I am convinced. But I am also satisfied that no intention was present to command universally the adoption of that form. Churches, like theologies, must live by their adaptation to the truth of things and the needs of men. I am content to rest Congregationalism on this basis. It is to me the freest, fittest, most competent, instrument of religious culture and work. Therefore I am a Congregationalist. But the very reasons which make me attached to my own polity dispose me also to respect the preferences of other Evangelical Christians, and to wish for their Churches, as for my own, the blessing of our common Father, the presence of our common Lord.

III.

BY DR. JOHN CLIFFORD, M.A., LL.B., B.SC.

THE late Dr. Norman Macleod, speaking at a "Pan-missionary meeting" in Calcutta, said, "If any man asks me why I am a Presbyterian I can scarcely tell. I might perhaps adopt the answer of Topsy, and say, 'specks I growd.' I was never asked whether I would be a Scotchman or an Englishman. I found myself a Presbyterian because my father, himself a Presbyterian minister, was one before me. And I for one have seen no reason to change my persuasion; for I believe that these differences to some extent will always exist so long as men are born with different mental characteristics, so long as each man has his peculiar tastes and temperament, so long as each denomination has to deal with the great historical past, and so long as we continue to see through a glass darkly."

That is an easily defensible position, as my predecessor in this series of "Confessions" has ably and clearly shown. A large wisdom, a comprehensive view of complex facts, and a catholic spirit, are its distinguishing notes; and yet most listeners will feel that it is as inadequate as it is commonplace, and fails as much in logical severity and spiritual completeness as it succeeds in maintaining fraternal fellowship and securing social ease. Men with a deep passion for reality, and a holy impatience of non-

conformity between the outward and the inward life, want to know why persons of clear piercing sight, self-suppressing aims, and inflexible will, *remain* in the Church circle into which they were born, after they have seen and deplored its defects, quarrelled with its traditions, denounced its prejudices, and cordially appreciated the excellences of other systems of Church life and work. Indeed a subtle, but real emphasis, is on the second word of the query at the head of this paper, and Mr. Horton read it as I also must, as though it meant—not why *were* you a Congregationalist a quarter of a century ago; but why are you one *now*; why do you abide in the place in which you were called after, as in my case, thirty-six years experience of its working; close observation of its faults, and a fairly wide knowledge of the assertions of its palpable inferiority, in the judgment of good and capable men, to other organizations.

Had Paul remained "a Pharisee of the Pharisees" we had never heard of him. He left the Church of his fathers, and remained in the Church of his personal choice for nearly thirty years — gave it his maturest thought and ripest service, and was more exultingly sure of the wisdom of the change he made, when he was dying for his convictions, than at any prior time. In the long story of Christianity nothing is more quickening to the intelligence, or informing as to the springs and motives of human action, than his answer to the question why he became and *remained* a Christian, in the face of the fiercest opposition, and at the cost of all that was most precious to him.

The question is one of *Ideals*. Church systems are the clothing of an inward life. Government is an organizing of ideas. The rule of a home, a nation, and a Church, flows from the ideals that have "free course" in home, and state, and Church. Archbishop Benson says, "There never was anything worth contemplating, from a Rafaele to a railroad, which did not begin with an ideal." The supreme test is therefore twofold, the quality, grandeur, and perfectness of the Ideal; and the demonstrable aptness of the methods for actualizing it.

But ideals lose their loveliness on the dusty roads of actual life; and some indeed vanish out of sight amid the painful monotones and wearisome details of practical experience. Even the "Divine Idea," the "Eternal Word," has no beauty in its human embodiment that we should desire it. So our most captivating Church Ideals look like the veriest homespun, when we see them worn as the veritable garments of human workers amongst the limitations and sins of men. Of Congregationalism it is commonly said, "It is good enough for angels, but not for ordinary men," which being fully and fairly interpreted, means, not that it is an irritating impracticability for all men; but that for Christians, for regenerate men, it is an Ideal so large, generous and free, so essentially spiritual and inward, so exalting to the Redeemer of souls and King of men, and so exacting upon the forces of the God-given life, that it goads its owners out of their natural indolence and selfishness, sets their affections and yearnings on things above and beyond, quickens their enthusiasm for personal culture and the redemption of the lost, and "makes the coming life-cry, on, and always on."

No man remains an Episcopalian, or a Presbyterian, or a Wesleyan, or a Congregationalist, because the working of his system is faultless. We know better. I have seen the Congregational polity at work, and tried to use my life through it for God and men; I have seen it in village and in town, amongst quiet agriculturalists and in the hurrying city. As a lad of fifteen I took a share in its activities with an unconscious audacity that now surprises me, but to gain advantages I can never lose. I have seen it in a college for the training of Christian men as teachers of the Word and pastors of the flock of God. I have seen it in a small community agitated as with death-throes, by the election of deacons, or shattered as by an earthquake in choosing its religious leader, or rent and torn by that formidable personality—ignorantly supposed to be indigenous to Free Church life, and found nowhere else—a Diotrophes, who loves a pre-eminence for which he has neither gifts nor grace. Moreover, I have watched the Congregational

Ideal through all the varying experiences of twenty-eight years as a pastor of a metropolitan Church. If, therefore, I am a well-convinced Congregationalist now, it cannot be from ignorance of inherent or accidental evils belonging to that system of Church organization.

Nor is that all. In Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian Churches I have taken a deep and practical interest. The man who differs from me excites my mind more, and not infrequently profits me more, than he who agrees with me. The literary organs of other Churches have the charms of a fresh outlook, an unfamiliar setting of facts, new methods of work; and such papers as the *Church Times* are neither slow to acquaint us with what they regard as the practical failures of Congregationalism nor to laud and magnify the merits of the Anglican brotherhood. Not long since, it fell to my lot to preach to a Christian community in a Kentish village. I found that there was no small stir abroad, for the Archbishop of Canterbury was that day on a visit to the vicar, churchwardens, and people, inspecting the work, conferring with the leaders, and strengthening the religious life and activities of the Episcopal Church. I rejoiced in a system which, of set purpose, brought such a great spiritual leader, with such strenuous self-discipline, glowing fervour, and noble ability, to the aid of this humble Christian Society, and recognized as one of the chief merits of Episcopalianism, the use of the services of specially-gifted men for the more remote and isolated churches of the land. I rejoice in the eager and sustained aggressiveness of Methodism; in the cultivated ministry and wide-spread sympathy of the strong with the weak of Presbyterianism. I feel the spell of our great Anglican Church, with its historic edifices, its long line of learned men, its offer of spiritual aid to every member of the nation, its ready-made and external "authority" (so dear to the heart that covets quick and easy results)—to speak to every parishioner on "the things of the soul;" and, therefore, if I find myself, as I do, a more thoroughly convinced Congregationalist than ever, it is not because I am ignorant of the excellences of other polities, wanting in

sympathy with their aims, or incapable of gladness in their results.

The fact is, "results," as they are popularly understood and practically available, are not sufficient tests of the truth of any system of Church-life. They are *a* test, but not the only test. They may yield presumption, but not demonstration. They may captivate the fancy without convincing the reason. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Yes; but by the *whole* fruits. The standard of utility must embrace quality as well as quantity, the subtle influences on spirit and character as well as outward order and impressiveness; the making of manhood, as well as the building of edifices; the revelation of God in Christ to the souls of men, as well as the quickening of human sympathy; the infinite stretches of the future as well as the fleeting experiences of to-day. From a fair and full application of such a test Congregationalism fears nothing. Its methods are already vindicated. Its record is long and honourable. It appears with convincing fulness and splendour in the congregational societies of the New Testament and of the first century; and with unparalleled wealth of missionary self-sacrifice and enthusiasm in the Churches of this century, both in the United States and in our own land. We are grateful for our place in English history. We stand in a noble succession. Great spiritual achievements signalized our birth and early years. The entire nation thrives by the possession of religious liberties our fathers fought for, and died to secure. All Churches are enriched by the splendid heroism of faithful souls—faithful even to death. And if we require further confirmation of the essential truth of Congregationalism and its immediate availableness for the present needs of men, it appears with singular fulness in the energy with which it is pervading most of the Churches of Jesus Christ, both in this and in other lands.*

* This New Congregationalism is recognized by an unbiassed authority in the following passage:—"If the secret of the past be the key to the future, the institutions of Christianity are destined in the providence of God, in the days that are to come, to shape

But though I confess my convictions gain strength in the study of the various results of the Congregational polity, yet I must say it is its exalted and perfect Ideal that appeals to my faith and aspirations, satisfies my reason, holds me, as with invisible but potent hands, and makes it impossible for me to carry my intelligence and conscience into any other system.

Amongst the qualities of that Ideal of what God meant His Church to be, the features of that image of the Christian Society which is in the Divine mind, is the unrestricted and absolute mastery of Christ over the individual and corporate life of those who believe in Him. Christ is Christianity, and the function of the Church is to make Him manifest to men. A Church defiles its office if it does not bring the God of Christianity more and more home to the mind of its members, and through them to the world. In the degree in which it eclipses Christ, instead of revealing Him, it fails; yea, is it not even false to its original mandate? In the Congregational system every atom gravitates around Christ, expressly denies any other centre and law, and so unswervingly asserts His entire sway as to make it impracticable to find an orbit for any intervening authority. It refers all to Him, and tends to create the habit, in the individual and the organization, of instinctive reference to Him and His will as final and supreme. It never says, "Hear the Church, hear the Church"; but rather, "This is God's beloved Son, hear Him,"—each soul for himself. "Call no man master, one is your Master"; and He is not

themselves in new forms to meet the new needs of men. To the general character of those forms many indications point. It would seem as though, in that vast secular revolution which is accomplishing itself, all organizations, whether ecclesiastical or civil, must be, as the early Churches were, more or less democratical; and the most significant fact of modern Christian history is that, within the last hundred years, many millions of our own race and our own Church, without departing from the ancient faith, have slipped from beneath the inelastic framework of the ancient organization, and formed a group of new societies on the basis of a closer Christian brotherhood and an almost absolute democracy."—Prof. Hatch, "Bampton Lectures," p. 220.

Pope or Bishop, not Council or Synod—but “Christ; and all ye are brothers.” There is nothing between the soul and God in Christ; not a creed, be it Apostolic or Nicene; not a man or body of men. “Without Me ye can do nothing.” “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Dependence on His guidance is entire; loyalty to His authority is unbroken. The Church says—

Yea, through life, death, through sorrow, and through sinning,
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed;
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.*

The ages declare some of the incalculably blessed results of this position. Nothing so aids in the growth of character, or quickens enthusiasm, or energizes the will. Better guarantees for fidelity to the faith once delivered to the saints cannot be found than those which arise out of the maintenance of the exclusive authority of Christ over souls. No magnet draws man to man so surely. In fact the Church system which most magnifies the sufficiency of Christ, and opens souls to his unchecked sway gives the best proof of being according to “His mind,” and the surest promise of achieving His purpose.

Again, who does not know that nothing educates like personal responsibility, and enlarges like a continuous effort to discharge important functions in connection with others. Writers on civil government and national growth affirm that it is in local and self-governing institutions freedom takes refuge from the tyranny of despots and the arrogance of imperialists, and that the spirit of progress is fed and nourished to manly strength. Sir Henry Maine declares that the village communities of India were the chief preservers of peace and order during centuries of invasion and revolution. De Tocqueville finds in the town meetings of the States of America the most powerful auxiliaries of Patrick Henry and George Washington in building up the

* “St. Paul.” By F. H. W. Myers.

Republic of the West.* John Morley says—"The most civilizing agency in the world is the habit of orderly and disciplined co-operation with others, and the rising sense of mutual connection and interdependence for common ends." The Congregational Ideal tells each man that he belongs to a spiritual order, and is himself a vital and responsible part of it, qualified by the Divine life he possesses to discharge services of endless importance to it. So it tends to make the most of all men; even the feeblest and lowliest; battles against the practical atheism which shuts out any man from a share in the divinest work on earth; and sets before all souls splendid possibilities of consecrated work for God and men. No ideal surpasses the Congregational in affording leverage for spiritual and moral effort in the regeneration of the world.

That responsibility being personal and entire, it follows that the ideal Christian Society must be "free" and "independent" both of external and internal domination. Freedom is the historical atmosphere for the finest moral and spiritual growths, and, notwithstanding the serious risks incident to individual and social "independence," it is found to be essential to a robust, expanding, and fully cultured life. Immature and blundering as the Corinthians are, and strong and authoritative as Paul is, he disclaims any "dominion over their faith." Their stability is in freedom. Their full education and service depend upon their liberty. I cherish the Congregational Ideal because I see it is in the line of all human progress in its maintenance of the great doctrine of the Freedom of souls.

And yet though free from men, we are under authority to the great law of Christ to make spiritual and ethical objects supreme. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." "He that would save his life must lose it for My sake and the gospel's" are cardinal Church laws. The unit of the Christian Society is a regenerate

* "There is no difficulty in showing that the ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty, or supreme controlling power in the last resort, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community."—John Stuart Mill on Representative Government, p. 21.

soul, and each in his place, and the whole organization, is rendered adequate for work, not by culture or by the wisdom of this world, but by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. "The Church is the habitation of God through the Spirit." In the Acts of the Apostles it deliberates, confers, decides, and acts at His bidding. "It is the body of Christ," of Christ the Spirit; an organization of which He is the moulding Life; therefore its aim, temper, worship, and work are to be from first to last spiritual and ethical. What a provision this! against fulfilling the lusts of worldliness and vain show, and for warming, cherishing, and uplifting the spiritual life!

To me once more, and briefly, it is a superlative excellence of this Ideal that it keeps all those who cherish it, *modern*; with an eye open to the drift of the ages, an ear listening to the voice of the Spirit, and a soul inspired to face new or newly-realized problems. The Egyptian sage said, "The Greeks are always young." The Congregational Church is never too old to learn. John Robinson expressed its faith when he said, "There is yet more light to break forth from God's Holy Word," and our present efforts to grapple with upspringing social difficulties are a witness to the adaptability of means which may go along with fixed retention of eternal facts and truths, and an unshaken trust in the adequacy of the gospel of Christ to meet all the needs of man's complex life.

Putting together our History and our Ideal, I confess that our story seems to me full of—

Words of hope and bright examples given,

To show through moonless skies that there is light in heaven.

"History," says the Bishop of Durham, "is an excellent cordial for drooping courage." Ours is not drooping; we have been nourished for fortitude; and our history inspires us to face the morrow with a great hope. Of our Fivefold Ideal I say, with Browning:

I believe it! 'Tis Thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive:
In the first is the last, in Thy will is my power to believe.

* * * * *

Why am I not loth
 To look that, even that, in the face too ! Why is it I dare
 Think but lightly of such impuissance ? What stops my despair ?
 This—'tis not what man Does which exalts him, but what man
 Would do !

AN OLD STORY RE-TOLD.*

It may sound a somewhat extravagant eulogy to say that Dr. Gardiner's new volume, in which he gives the narrative of the first years of our great Civil War, has for us all the interest and fascination of a romance. Our author has not the brilliancy of a Macaulay, or the singular charm of a Froude. He does not overpower us by the splendour of his pictures or dazzle by the glitter of his rhetoric. His aim is to instruct rather than to excite or please ; but the instruction is conveyed in so clear a form, and is in itself so valuable, that we do not feel the absence of the more sensational qualities. Perhaps it is their very absence which gives his narrative such a charm of freshness and novelty. It has often been told by partizans ; and, indeed, it is very difficult for an Englishman, in dealing with this period of our story, to divest himself entirely of partizan feelings. He inherits the traditions either of Cavalier or Roundhead, and, as the battle in which he is himself engaged has such close affinity to that which was fought out by Pym and Strafford or by Rupert and Cromwell, he must lean to those with whom he is in closest sympathy. It is Dr. Gardiner's great merit that he has been able so far to rise above feelings of this kind, and to do justice to all parties engaged. Possibly had he yielded to them, the story might have been more exciting in its character ; but we should have lost in fairness and accuracy more than we gained in fire and enthusiasm. What we want in the historian is veracity. The most impartial inquirer is liable to error. Documents may be misleading, or he, with the

* *History of the Great Civil War.* By SAMUEL R. GARDINER, M.A., LL.D. Vol. I. (Longmans, Green, and Co.)

most honest intentions, may interpret them wrongly; and so it may be that we do not get the exact truth. But let us at least have veracity—the desire, “nought to extenuate, nought to set down in malice,” and that desire so earnest that it will spare no effort in its endeavour to ascertain the truth.

This is one of Dr. Gardiner's characteristics, and it is this which, as much as anything else, has given him so high a place among the historians of our days. In virtue of it he is making this Stuart period distinctly his own. We return then to our starting-point, that this volume has the charm of an exciting novel. Often as we have trodden the ground before, we feel as though we had never known it until, under Dr. Gardiner's guidance, we have penetrated into hidden spots of beauty, or wandered along unfamiliar and neglected by-paths, or climbed up some eminence from which we have gained an entirely new and striking view of the landscape. We do not write thus because we feel ourselves in perfect agreement with our author in all points. Indeed, one of his distinctive characteristics is that, without sharing the Puritan enthusiasm, he is able nevertheless to appreciate so fully the service which that enthusiasm rendered to English liberty. Testimony like his, valuable at all times, is peculiarly opportune and welcome at present. We are in the midst of a reactionary movement among the very classes to whom a man of Dr. Gardiner's calibre will appeal with special authority. Falkland is the idol of the school of which Mr. Matthew Arnold is the corypheus; and it is stoutly maintained that the man of culture, of philosophic moderation, of a spirit so gentle that it shrunk from conflict, was the ideal patriot; and that the compromise after which he vainly struggled was the policy of highest statesmanship. It is of little use for Puritan sympathizers to reply to this, for their representations are discounted as coloured by the invincible prejudice of their Philistinism. Dr. Gardiner is open to no such suspicion. His own judgment, as we gather, would be in favour of what may be regarded as the solution which would have been accepted by Falkland and his friends,

but his contention is that such a solution would have been impossible had reformers all been of the Falkland temper. His book, therefore, comes in good time to correct impressions which have been spreading as to the relative positions of the two parties to the great strife which practically settled the character of our Constitution. The Oxford "Catholic" movement could not but colour men's views in relation to the period from which it borrowed so much of its inspiration and doctrine. Laud was the true parent of that high Anglicanism which has been revived in our day by Pusey and Newman. Of course their disciples revolted from the teachings of Macaulay and Carlyle, Sanford, Forster, Masson, and others to whom we owe the resurrection of the great reputations which had been so foully and cruelly slandered by the writers of the Restoration. The essays of Dr. Mozley are the most striking illustration of this new spirit, which the *British Critic* did its utmost to foster, as they are the most powerful statement of the case on the opposite side. Strange to say, the party have found allies where they might least have expected them. Agnosticism or Rationalism must hate Anglicanism and priestism of every kind, and yet to some of its representatives even the priest is more tolerable than the Puritan with his intensity of conviction and enthusiasm of zeal. Hence there has been a growth of an anti-Puritan sentiment in two opposite directions. If there is anything which can serve to counteract it, it is such a dispassionate and masterly telling of the old story has given it.

If there is one thing which, beyond all others, is made clear by this narrative, it is that England in that seventeenth century was saved by the enthusiasts whom their enemies represent as fanatics. Our author has an intense admiration for quaint old Thomas Fuller, and the broad and large-hearted Chillingworth; but he is forced reluctantly to the conclusion that they failed to see the actual want of the time, and that the "sectaries" whom they condemned understood better the problem to be solved, and rendered a more necessary service to the country. The time came when the more moderate views of these

lovers of peace and apostles of charity prevailed to an extent ; but they would have had no chance of being heard at all, had not the braver spirits done battle against the tyranny of the king and the priest. It was one of those critical periods in which he that was not for the cause of liberty and right was against it. Suggestions of compromise were signs of weakness if not of something worse, so long as the king was resolved to concede nothing, and, so far from having any honest purpose in negotiations, only meant to use them as a mask for the intrigues in which he put so much trust. Amiable dreamers who refused to see facts as they were, and pleased themselves with ideals they did nothing to realize, were only too ready to hope for peace long after it had become impossible, except by the triumph of one party or the other ; but such men do not shape the character of great revolutions, and in fact their irresolution serves only to increase the very evils which they would fain avert. The Puritanism to which England owed the salvation of her liberties at this crisis was made of sterner stuff. True, it did not determine the character of the final settlement in 1688, which approached more nearly to the views of Falkland than those of Pym, but it was the stern resolution of Pym, enforced by the broad swords of Cromwell and his Ironsides, which alone made such a settlement possible.

The extremely calm and judicial spirit which inspires Dr. Gardiner throughout, enables us to appreciate more fully than we have done before the extraordinary difficulties against which the Parliament had to contend, and the nature of the forces by which they were overcome. When Charles unfurled his standard at Nottingham, he might reasonably have calculated on a complete and not very distant victory. Though his friends were in a minority in Parliament, and though he had provoked popular indignation by his foolish attempt to seize the five members, there was no reason to believe that the nation or any considerable portion of it was prepared to take up arms against its lawful sovereign. Even in the constitutional struggle which had been waged since the meeting of the

Long Parliament, or indeed of the short one which preceded it, there had been a continuous reduction in the power of his assailants. At every new advance of the Parliamentary party it had left behind some of its adherents, and prominent among the friends and counsellors of the King at the commencement of the war were some who at the opening of the Parliament had been conspicuous members of the Opposition. He could not be accused of being too sanguine if he hoped that when the strife of words was succeeded by actual war, and resistance was pushed to the point of armed insurrection against the King, the reaction would receive additional impetus. Such calculation was fully justified by the event. It was soon found that there were many friends of liberty who were ready enough to vote against unconstitutional conduct on the part of the King or his ministers, whose reverence for Constitution made them equally unwilling to have recourse to arms. Beside these strict Constitutionalists there were the timid, the half-hearted, the men who were more alive to the loss and suffering which war must inevitably entail, than to the humiliation and sacrifice involved in surrender to the King. In the early years of the war the peace party was numerous and formidable, and its incessant attempts to find out some way of accommodation necessarily hampered the action of the generals. Successive disappointments did not discourage them from fresh attempts, and, closing their eyes to the clearest evidence that Charles was only trifling with them, and made no real overture towards conciliation, they were perpetually on the watch for fresh opportunities of reviving their dangerous, not to say disloyal, negotiations. They were in a majority in the Lords, and had powerful support in the Commons, including (after the battle of Edge Hill, at which he was present) Hollis, one of the five members whom the King had singled out for his vengeance, but who had been so affected by the sickening horrors of his first engagement, that he was ready to make large sacrifices rather than be a party to the continuance of the war. "Especially," says our author, "to the wealthy merchant and the wealthy landowner the prospect of the long inter-

ruption of commerce, of plunderings in the town and country, was appalling." Hence, even in London, which was the centre of the Parliamentary force, there was a strong peace party, ready at every difficult crisis to declare itself in favour of some new attempt to end the unnatural strife.

We cannot wonder that those who lived in the midst of civil war were so intent upon peace that they failed to perceive that their object was unattainable except by concessions which were impossible; but their pertinacity enhanced the difficulties of the Parliament to an enormous extent. All the more therefore are we bound to admire the resolution of the men who in the darkest hours refused to despair of the fortunes of liberty. Reading the story as set forth in all its minuteness in this interesting volume, we are continually lost in amazement at the unbending resolution of the great man who, during that first and most trying stage of the conflict, was at the head of the Parliament. The conditions under which the war was carried on were sufficiently hampering, for men who were contending for law and liberty could not easily reconcile themselves to the high-handed proceedings which were necessary to a successful prosecution of the war. They had no constitutional right to enforce loans, or levy taxes, or create an army, and yet how without such resources war could be carried on at all was not very apparent. At first the Parliament had to depend largely on the trained bands of London, who often fought very bravely, but whose period of service with the colours was so short, that they were all but useless for a prolonged campaign; or on regiments hastily raised in the counties and unwilling to act outside their own districts. It is easy to blame the Earl of Essex for the reverses which at one time threatened the absolute ruin of the Parliamentary cause, and which would assuredly have brought about this result had there been a less resolute spirit at the helm, and perhaps we ought to add, and had there not been a Cromwell in the army. But Essex had discouragements, disappointments, and vexations enough to break the stoutest heart. A general who could trust neither

his officers nor his soldiers, whose army was little better than a mob, a large portion of which was without even a semblance of discipline, who was beset with all kinds of jealousy and disaffection, and whose very successes were continually marred by the withdrawal of his best troops at the most critical moment, was in evil case indeed. Hesitations and intrigues in London, heart-burnings among the leaders and insubordination or want of zeal among the men, the selfishness of a wretched provincialism unable to rise to the grandeur of a national crisis, formed a chain of obstructions through which it was not easy to break. Essex was a brave and loyal soldier, as Dr. Gardiner never fails to remind us, and though it is possible he may have lacked spirit and enterprise—a point on which perhaps we ought to accept the judgment of his contemporaries—yet it is hard to see how he could have overcome the difficulties by which he was hemmed in. A Cromwell would have broken through the meshes of the net, as in fact he eventually did. But the Cromwells are not a numerous tribe, and it would be unfair to Essex to complain that he was not of the number.

But we have not enumerated these difficulties as items in an apology for Essex; we point to them rather as evidence of the nature of the gigantic work which was undertaken and successfully performed by the leaders of the Parliament. We use the term deliberately to discriminate between the ruling few and the somewhat impracticable body in whose name they ruled. A Parliament is useful for many purposes, but it is pre-eminently unfitted to be a Council of War, and the most distinguished of all Parliaments was no exception to the rule. It has been too much the habit to invest it with an ideal greatness. The Parliament stands out in opposition to the King, and to it accrues the *κῆδος* of the brave and the heroic stand against his tyranny, first in the legislature and then in the field of battle. It was the Parliament which in that evil hour stood between England and a despotism such as had stifled the liberties of the Continental peoples; the Parliament which hurled Strafford from his proud eminence and vindicated the liberties he had outraged; the Parliament which through anxious and

wearying campaigns, often marked by crushing disasters, prosecuted the war to the bitter end. But when we come to inspect the action of this great historic body by the aid of Dr. Gardiner's microscope we find that the first and not the last achievement of the leaders in this revolution was the conquest of the Parliament itself. No one who knows human nature can be surprised that it was so, but we are indebted to our author for a remarkably vivid picture of the facts.

It requires but a slight exercise of imagination to call up before our minds the London and the Parliament of those stirring but troublous times. The City was in a very different temper from that which prevails to-day, for London was the great hope of the patriots. Amid the clothiers of the West Riding and the energetic people of Lancashire, Puritanism had a strong hold, while throughout the Eastern Association, and some parts of the Midlands, it was all but supreme. But London was the heart of the movement, and it was specially strong among the "Conscript Fathers." Even in London, however, there was a powerful opposition, which had its adherents chiefly in the suburbs, already putting on the characteristics of modern "Villadom." Of course Royalist intriguers were abroad everywhere, eager to stir up movements on behalf of their master, and using for this purpose the discontents of those who had personal grievances against the Administration, or the noblest aspirations of those who longed for peace. The Parliament itself could not but reflect these varying feelings. It had its parties as in more peaceful days, and too often they allowed the spirit of faction to blind their judgment, and even to strangle their patriotism. It would not be hard to find, even in that heroic House (for with all its faults there was a spirit of heroism in it), counterparts to the divisions of our own day. The Tories had withdrawn with the King, but it was surprising how soon a new Tory party reconstituted itself, and that not once only, but after each successive secession. The "Fourth party" had many representatives, and in it were sub-divisions, but they were eccentric or extreme theorists, not ambitious self-

seekers. How such a body, checked by a dissatisfied House of Lords, and sometimes assailed by popular clamour, was to conduct a war was a problem about as perplexing as any which politicians were ever called to solve.

We cannot within the limits of an article undertake to show how it was done. For this we must refer our readers to Dr. Gardiner's narrative, only hoping that it may yield them as much pleasure and instruction as we ourselves have found in it. One or two points only can we notice, and those with extreme brevity. It can hardly be questioned that it was the commanding genius of Pym which rendered ultimate success possible. His death at a critical period in the conflict, when the first fruits of his sagacious policy were beginning to be reaped, was pathetic, but it may be that it was not so disastrous to the great cause as appeared to his contemporaries, certainly not so disastrous as it would have been a few months before. Dr. Gardiner very truly says :

It may be that Pym was happy in the opportunity of his death. New issues were opening before the nation, with respect to which his judgment was likely to be at fault. His own greatness was, unlike that of Strafford, the greatness of one who embraces much to which he can give no definite form. The whole future constitution of England was in his mind, but it was there in a fluid state, incapable as yet of being reduced into practical shape. King and Lords and Commons were there, with the Commons to give the decisive word. The right of appeal from the House of Commons to outside opinion was there, and due submission to the majesty of the law was there as well. Party discipline and combination filled no small place in his plans. All these things floated before him as the wreaths of smoke which poured from the opened casket in the Arabian tale. The time would come when the coiling vapours would take shape in that settlement of the Revolution of 1688, which was one day to give repose to England. When Pym died there was sorrow and regret, but there was no wail of despair. He had not created the Parliamentary party, neither was his help needed to sustain it. That party had been created by Charles, and as long as Charles lived and reigned it would in some form or other continue to exist (pp. 303-304).

What course Pym would have taken under the altered conditions it is impossible to predict. But certainly those who admire him most will be the first to rejoice that after

the brave part which he played in the early part of the conflict he was not exposed to the temptation, in his later years, of separating himself from the party of progress, and advocating a policy in opposition to all the noblest aspirations of his life. Few spectacles are more sad than that of a veteran apostle of liberty in the ranks of the party of reaction. Pym was spared this humiliation. It is probably unfair to him to suspect that he would not have been equal to the demands of the new period which was opening before the country. In it the Independents were to play the prominent part. Even in the early part of this volume it is sufficiently apparent that the master mind in the army was that of Cromwell, and at the close of the period that he and the party of which he was the chief were rapidly gaining supremacy. Throughout the volume Dr. Gardiner insists that the whole strength of the Parliamentary movement was in the men who had a supreme regard for religion. Mere political opponents like the two Hothams were easily seduced to the King's side. It was the men of strong conscientious convictions who realized, in all its fulness, the gravity of the issue, and were prepared to fight even to the death. It is a natural tendency in such a party to that full development of principle which some call extreme. Hence the Independents naturally acquired ascendancy. Dr. Gardiner does justice to their services, although he never fails to intimate his dissent from their ideas. "Fuller (he says) and not the Puritans stood on the true line of national progress, though it must also be acknowledged that without the Puritan, that progress would have been impossible." We do not care to discuss how far the first of these statements is true. We are content to accept the admission in the last, especially when taken in connection with another statement of our author's, which to our mind contains the entire secret of their wonderful story. "Sturdy Puritanism (he tells us) made much possible to man by believing all things to be possible to God."

PAUL GERHARDT: THE NATIONAL HYMN-
WRITER OF GERMANY.

THE soul of a nation is in its poetry. It is there we shall find its religion, the motive-power of its work, the tendency of its government, the manner of its thought, the expression of its highest inspiration and of its divinest impulses. Neither in Herbert Spencer nor Tyndall, neither in Hallam nor Green, should I seek for the moving spirit of England; but in Tennyson, in Carlyle, in Matthew Arnold, and Robert Browning. For it is with nations as with men; no amount of logic and concise knowledge and scientific speculation will teach you much of the one or of the other. Of both you can only feel and understand the inner life by the magic of imaginative sympathy. Thus is the poet the true revealer of the spiritual world which is cased round so closely with its material wrappings, the high-priest of a humanity stripped of all form and struggling to express in broken speech of word or action its own needs and dimly conceived ideals.

Paul Gerhardt's poetry is as much the expression of the whole heart of his nation and age as the utterance of his individual aspirations. In the ardour of his religious faith, in the enthusiastic belief which carried everything before it, as well as in his fierce denunciation of all who differed from him in thought or doctrine, we catch something of the spirit which impelled men to that long struggle of thirty years of such vast religious and political consequences. He wrote in a time when all questions—questions of empires and principalities no less than of thought or action—originated in questions of religion, and therefore are his poems most really and truly *Geistliche Lieder*. It is calm, triumphant faith without the shadow of a doubt, that they express from beginning to end, faith without a trace of the sad baffled search after a Deity, of the struggles of weary intellects, of the ringing note of hopeless sorrow, which pervade so much of the poetry of to-day. Indeed, were we inclined to criticise a faith so simple yet so sublime, the faith of a child "on whom the

Father's face has never yet but smiled," we might reasonably complain of too gross a personality ascribed to a spiritual God, who has no hand that we should kiss it, nor a foot that we should bow beneath it. Men found in his song the expression of their own needs and sorrows, because it had been wrought in the furnace of the poet's own heart and written with its blood. No other hymns have so linked themselves to the customs of a nation, so interwoven themselves with the common life of common men as some of Paul Gerhardt's; and this not so much on account of their sublime beauty and artistic excellence, as of the tenderness with which he handles human sorrow, and comforts with the comfort wherewith he had himself been comforted. When Goethe, Herder, and Lessing are banished to the library bookshelves for the edification of the cultured and the learned, his *Spiritual Songs* will still have an honoured place in the memory of the people; sung at every fireside, whispered in every sick room, consecrating alike the marriage feast and the dying bed.

He stands foremost among hymn-writers, both for the quality and quantity of his verse. Luther alone can be compared to him; but his is rather the product of the Church than of the workshop and home, and it is only the poetry which we can carry with us to these places of common life that ever really lives. Luther looked at the Church and the world and the temptations of men, and sang *about* them. Gerhardt experienced, and then sang as the result of the experience because he could not help it. So to all time his poetry remains a lasting record of human needs and human consolations, the voice of a brother speaking to the hearts of his brothers concerning the deep central joy and peace of a life rooted and grounded in the Eternal and Unseen. It matters not to us who read his poetry to-day that we have renounced many of the beliefs he held true, that in his verse is much crude thought and offensive realism; he has touched the chords of our spirit with a master hand, and whether we agree with him or not we are swept into his world of sublime trust and love, and compelled to acknowledge his kinship with ourselves.

Our knowledge of Gerhardt's life is very imperfect, although we possess a spiritual biography of him in his "Hundred and One Songs." He was born at Gräfenhainichen in 1607, a small town between Halle and Wittenberg, of a good, middle-class family. His father was burgomaster, but died, as did also his mother, when Paul was still a child. At a school in Grimma he underwent a stern discipline which did much to develop his natural fortitude and courage, and from the few records remaining of this time we are enabled to gather proofs of his steady industry and perseverance, and the high approval of his masters. Thence he removed to the University of Wittenberg, where his studies were often interrupted by the Thirty Years' War. In 1651 we find him still living in Berlin. Here he was ordained Provost of the church at Mittenwald—a small town in the neighbourhood of the capital. At the same time he seems to have been engaged as tutor in the Barthold family, one of whom he afterwards married. That his position in Mittenwald was not a pleasant one we judge by his eager haste to return to Berlin, which he did in 1657, to fill the office of deacon. But if the post he had left had not been to his taste, the one he now held proved to be full of unforeseen difficulty and suffering.

It was the time when the fiercest disputes were raging between the Reformed Church of Calvin and the Lutheran, the original Church of the Reformation. Since the publication of the Edict of Concord in 1577, all the bitterness and hate of religious strife had divided the Protestants just when they most needed their united strength to withstand the tyranny and aggressive warfare of Ferdinand and the other Catholic princes. And this separation was more keenly felt when the smaller German states came together in larger principalities. Many attempts were made to unite the Lutherans and Reformers by means of theological conferences, but without success; and it was not till civil authority interposed in 1817 that a union was effected, and this was merely one of government, and not of doctrine and worship.

So much of the history of the German Church it is

necessary to keep in mind to understand at all the life of Gerhardt in Berlin, for from the time of his entrance on his deaconship in that city, the fire of controversy, which had smouldered for so long, now and then giving signs of still vigorous life, was stirring uneasily and fitfully, and it was only waiting a match to blaze forth in all its old strength. That match was applied by Frederick William III., who tried to force on both churches a new liturgy. The old and strict Lutherans, of whom Gerhardt was one, boldly resisted, exciting the fierce wrath of the emperor. Gerhardt, among many others, was turned out of his Church, and it seems that, tyrannical as it was, he quietly submitted. He was a peaceful man, this Paul Gerhardt, to whose eyes, filled as they were with heavenly visions, the irrational actions of an emperor appeared of little account, scarcely worthy indeed of the song (the only one, with a single exception, actually biographical) which Gerhardt wrote on the subject. What were emperors, with all their splendour of traditionary royalty and absolute sway, to the man who could sing, with eye fixed on the Eternal Realities, "*Befiehl du deine Wege,*" or, in Wesley's beautiful translation—

Commit thou all thy griefs.

Such a faith as that is above all emperors, councils, and creeds whatsoever!

But though Gerhardt may have been willing quietly to hide himself in a humble home, the flock, to whom he had so faithfully ministered, were not inclined to pacific measures. They insisted with such fierce earnestness on his restoration, that even Frederick thought it politic to yield with as good a grace as possible, and Gerhardt was recalled. Unwilling, however, and perhaps unable, to endure longer the irritating anxieties resulting from his position as the leader of an opposition Church, he retired voluntarily, and was almost immediately promoted to be archdeacon of Lübben. Of the seven years he spent there we know absolutely nothing, nor of his death, which occurred in 1676.

His was a stormy life, but he has left everywhere on his pages the impression of a rarely sunny and peaceful nature. Much of the simplicity and gaiety, the trust and love, of childhood clung to him through the troubled years of manhood. He drank of the fountain of eternal youth, because he lived like a confiding child in the sunlight of a heavenly Father's love. The consciousness of being held up in the Everlasting Arms, shut in on every side by Divine care, is an idea which runs through all his poetry, and testifies to the joyous reality of his spiritual life. His satisfaction and delight in God are always personal. It has, indeed, been said that the eighth part of Gerhardt's hymns begin with *Ich*; while Luther, on the contrary, never individually addresses God. Whilst he sings in a grand triumphant strain—

Ein feste burg ist unser Gott,

Gerhardt goes further, and boldly says—

Ist Gott für mich so trete.

It sometimes seems as though his joy in this Divine Protector overflowed all bounds; words fail him to express his sense of gladness; and the most beautiful terms of endearment and trust rush from his lips.

My Comfort, Treasure, Strength and Light,

My Life and Saviour tender!

Ah! take me for Thy portion quite,

As I myself surrender!

There's nought but pain apart from Thee,

I nought but gall discover.

Earth all over

Nought ever comforts me,

No balm can me recover.

Ah! fairest One, what faileth me

In Thy great Love of blessing?

It is my Sun that lightens me,

My Well-spring me refreshing!

My sweetest Wine, my heavenly Bread,

My Cov'ring when before Thee,

And my Glory,

My Shield in hour of need,

My House that riseth o'er me."

And this God, who is everything to him, is pre-eminently a God of joy, taking delight in the gladness of His children.

Shall I not my God be praising,
 And in Him not joyful be,
 For in all His works amazing
 See I not His care for me?
 Is it not pure love that filleth,
 And His faithful Heart o'erflows,
 When He ever cares for those
 Who do only what He willeth?
 All things run their course below,
 God's Love doth forever flow.

* * * *

His most beautiful songs are composed for common occasions in ordinary lives. Not for him is the task of soaring to the clouds, forgetful of the slight events interesting his next door neighbour; only around those slight events is there ever thrown the halo of his own trustful love. The art with which he handled everyday things, the constant uniting in his verse of the earthly and practical, of the passing and accidental, with the Eternal and Heavenly, is unequalled. The song composed on the simple occasion of a return from a ride is enrolled in the common song-book of a people, not because of the importance of the event, but because this home-coming is symbolic of the home-coming from the journey of life, and the joy which, more beautiful than that experienced in the earthly, he expected in the heavenly.

But together with his rapturous delight in God's love and tender care, Gerhardt has a very strong belief in the retribution of the wicked. No fate is too awful, no judgment too harsh, for those who have disobeyed the commands of the Almighty. They are the children of Satan, justly sentenced to eternal misery in the darkness of hell, and there is something terrible in the stern, pitiless way in which he depicts them undergoing the consequences of the wrath of God. No man is altogether so hard as his creed, least of all Gerhardt, and we would forbear passing judgment on a form of faith which belonged rather to his age

than to himself as the expression of his own individual belief. His song usually wells up from a pure and devout heart; but we must not be surprised to detect in it, here and there, signs of a faith somewhat narrower than that of the present day. It would be well, indeed, if our beliefs, boasting themselves in their broadness, could borrow a little of the fervour and exulting trust of Paul Gerhardt's. And his was no fair-weather faith, real enough when the sky bent in serene untroubled blue above his head, but becoming wavering and uncertain when storms shook the firmly-founded house. He still sang of God's love when he followed one by one his five children to the grave. By suffering he was to be made strong, and brought into fellowship with the suffering Son of God. The modern question of the origin and utility of pain, the answers to which often show such a sad lack of spiritual insight and understanding, troubled him not at all. His own heart found a ready answer to all the doubts and quibbles of theological schools, which had done their best to stiffen and mould into geometrical form the growing religion of a nation. Germany has to thank him for having given the people a song-book of their own, whose simple verses every child could understand and sing, and for having brought the poetry of the seventeenth century out of the dry formalism, the lifeless pedantry, and laboured art, which characterized it, into the clearer, purer atmosphere of personal experience and feeling.

RUTH BRINDLEY, LL.A.

AMATEUR CHURCH STATISTICS.

THE *British Weekly* appears to be displeased with our article on its recent census. We confess ourselves unable to understand its keen feeling. Surely the only object of any such inquiry is to elicit the truth, and if there be any reason to suspect that mistakes are being made and false inferences drawn, the critic who calls attention to them should

be regarded as a friend to all parties. Of course, if there was a foregone conclusion to be established, it would be natural enough that the exposure of errors in fact or fallacies in reasoning should be resented. But this is not even an admissible hypothesis in the present case. The *British Weekly* is in avowed sympathy, and though that sympathy may be perfectly consistent with a frank honesty in the exposure of their faults, the most candid friend would hardly carry his dispassionate treatment so far as to seek to make out a case against his own associates. It can be only parental regard which makes our contemporary so jealous for the honour of these unfortunate figures. We must say, however, for ourselves that we have been extremely tender in our treatment of them. The complaints which have reached us in relation to them are legion, and if even a fraction of them can be sustained, they are sufficient to discredit any argument based upon their accuracy. There is nothing surprising in this. These private attempts at numbering the people are sure to be unsatisfactory, and to lead to bitter controversy, which, as it does not affect principle at all, will be worse than useless.

The discussion about the census in Wales, carried out by an enterprising editor of a local newspaper, is another case in point. On the strength of its figures Mr. Gladstone has been asked to believe that the Established Church is the leading religious body in Wales. Suppose it were; what then? Is a sect, simply because it happens to be more numerous than any other, to be established as a State Church? Say what you will, it is only a sect, and one which numbers only a minority of the people. But who that has any acquaintance will believe that the Anglican Church is the most numerous among the tribes of the Welsh Israel? If there are figures which seem to show it, so much the worse for the figures. All that they prove is the worthlessness of statistics obtained by such methods. If statistics are to be of any value, they must be taken on a plan to which all interested parties have agreed, and whose numbers, therefore, are not open to dispute. That the editor of a newspaper, whether metropolitan or provin-

cial, should take a census when and how he pleases—possibly at a time which special circumstances make singularly unfair to some of the parties concerned, or by agents who are not experts, and commit gross mistakes—is bad enough, and in some cases may inflict injury upon individuals, but that the figures thus obtained should be quoted as decisive evidence in a great controversy is simply intolerable. The mischief does not stop even at this, for here is Mr. Sydney Robjohn pilloried by Mr. Byrom Reed and Church defenders as though he, or the Liberation Society, which he represents, were responsible for figures of which neither he nor the Society know anything, simply because Mr. Gee, who arranged for this census, is a member of the Executive Committee. Were this idea to hold good, the Society will need to take care how it places editors on its executive. The suggestion is a trifle too absurd. The Executive Committee of any society would have a heavy burden indeed if it were responsible for the action of any editor who might be one of its members. Responsibility and control go together, and we do not envy any Committee which should undertake to control an independent editor.

We are all the more free to criticize these amateur statistics inasmuch as we have persistently refused to have anything to do with these arithmetical discussions. We do not believe that we have ever appealed to Mr. Horace Mann's figures, and certainly never beyond using them to show that a large proportion of the worshippers at that time were not found within the Established Church. It is not necessary to our argument to contend that Nonconformists are in a majority, and, so far as its relevance to the question of Disestablishment is concerned, we should not be disturbed by the proof that we were in a more decided minority than the figures seem to show. We must insist, however, that the *British Weekly* mistakes the point. It claims that the congregations in mission halls and theatres should not be counted because they are not identified with either Church or Chapel. But the services are Nonconformist services all the same. The provision is not

made by the State Church, nor are the services under the regulation and on the lines of that Church. If we are to get a complete idea of the accommodation provided in the Metropolis, and the extent to which it is used, they must be reckoned. As to any bearing the figures have on the State Church controversy, the only question which arises is, whether these halls form part of the agency by which the Establishment is carrying on its work. It is no answer to this to say that some of their supporters are Churchmen. Indeed, if that means anything it means that they are so dissatisfied with the work of their own Church that they find it necessary to supplement it by these Nonconformist services. By reckoning these congregations as Nonconformists it is not implied that their votes are to be reckoned for Disestablishment, but only that their practice shows the insufficiency of the State Church for the very work it has undertaken to do.

Our valued contributor, Rev. Andrew Mearns, and the able writer in the *Nonconformist*, who has long been doing a service in this department, to which the *British Weekly* does but very scant justice, will fully vindicate their own figures. But the interposition of Mr. George Williams in the discussion suggests a point outside the immediate limits of the controversy which in our judgment is of far more importance than mere statistics. Some two or three years ago that excellent gentleman and sturdy Protestant presided at a lecture on one of the great Reformers, given by the editor of this Review. Speaking at the close, Mr. Williams referred to some of Mr. Gladstone's episcopal appointments, and claimed the assistance of Mr. Rogers in a protest against them and the Premier by whom they were made. The idea was a curious one. The prelates in question, including, be it remembered, the primate, were all ordained clergymen, or, if we are to speak in the language of the Prayer-Book and the High Church party, "priests" of the Church of England. They and their adherents contribute to swell that majority of which so much is made—indeed, apart from them there would be no majority at all, for, as the *Church Times* took care to point

out, the Ritualist congregations showed some of the largest figures. Yet the sympathy and co-operation of a Nonconformist minister were claimed by a gentleman who is now so anxious to secure the credit of the majority for his own Church in opposition to these prelates, and the immense section of that majority which they represent. The reply made by Mr. Rogers was obvious enough. He was ready enough to join in any action against the system which gave Mr. Gladstone or any other Premier the power to appoint bishops. In the internal quarrel he could not be expected to entangle himself. And now we find that Mr. Williams is content to win a victory over Dissenters by calling in the aid of these very Ritualists. As a *tu quoque* retort this would not be worth using, but in it lies a formidable objection to this parade of a numerical majority. The Church is a composite body, with sects of its own quite as antagonistic to each other as any Dissenting communities. We understand how Erastians are not troubled by this, but we are at a loss to comprehend how sticklers for Evangelical orthodoxy can attach so much importance to a majority largely composed of those whom they are so ready on other occasions to denounce as traitors to Protestantism if not to the gospel itself.

FIRST REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION.

WHILE the world is being agitated about Ireland and Irish questions, a movement is quietly going forward which may in its ultimate result inflict no little injury upon Nonconformity in this country. The supporters of Voluntary schools took advantage of the advent of a Tory Government to power in 1885 to secure the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the working of the Education Act. Of course it is impossible to divine what the report may be. But the Commission is so constituted that it is certain that the most favourable case possible will be made for the Voluntary schools. The first report has been pub-

lished. It contains, of course, only minutes of evidence. But it is a volume of singular interest and suggestiveness. Amongst other things it shows what extremely valuable service Dr. Dale and Mr. Richard are doing the Nonconformist cause on this Commission. We do not propose to make any comment on the evidence at present, but simply to leave the very acute and searching cross-examination by Dr. Dale to tell its own tale. The first questions refer to the definition of "suitable accommodation," and the result is sufficiently startling. The witness under examination is Patrick Comyn, Esq., Secretary of the English Education Department.

510. (*Dr. Dale.*) To go back to the definition of the word "suitable;" has your definition (the accuracy of which I accept) ever been officially published by the Department?—Yes. This is the interpretation of the word "suitable," given by Mr. Forster when the Act was passed in May, 1871: "In a letter from this office, which has been widely circulated, it was stated that efficient and suitable provision would be held to be made for a district where there is efficient elementary school accommodation, (1) within a reasonable distance of the home of every child who requires elementary instruction; (2) of which he can avail himself on payment of a fee within the means of his parents; and (3) without being required to attend any religious instruction to which his parent objects." This is a circular which was issued by the Department in the year 1871.

511. Then the rule of the Department, if I understand it rightly, is that a public elementary school connected with any denomination is suitable to the children of every other denomination?—No, they do not go into the question of suitability. The Legislature says, if you have that accommodation in a public elementary school there is the means according to our legislative view of a child getting elementary instruction.

512. A public elementary school connected with any denomination is suitable for the children of every other denomination?—That is the view of the Legislature.

This being the case, the working of the conscience clause becomes a matter of incalculable importance. Dr. Dale elicits from Rev. D. J. Stewart, one of the senior inspectors of schools, the following evidence as to the

CONSCIENCE CLAUSE.

3965. (*Dr. Dale.*) You said, I think, yesterday that there was a good deal of over-pressure in the case of teachers in country schools?—It has struck me for a great many years.

3966. Have many principal teachers of country schools other duties imposed upon them in addition to their day school work?—Sometimes they have, or used to have.

3967. Do you know whether it is common for them to be required to teach in the Sunday schools?—Yes.

3968. And sometimes to practise the choir?—Yes.

3969. Do you not think that they have quite enough to do in their ordinary day school work without having these additional duties imposed upon them?—Quite.

3970. I think you said that the ordinary time given to religious observances and religious instruction is from three-quarters of an hour to an hour, that is about one-sixth of the school time in the day?—Yes, that is about the time given.

3971. So that if a child is at school from 7 to 13 a whole year of its school time is given to religious instruction?—Yes.

3972. You said yesterday, I think, that in your judgment the conscience clause is quite effective?—I should say so.

3973. Can you tell us what its "effects" are?—Perfect protection for the child and the child's parents.

3974. But as I understand you have rarely seen a child protected by it?—I said that I had rarely seen a child withdrawn.

3975. Will you explain how it is effective if it protects no child?—I have never seen any cases of difficulty about the religious instruction given to children.

3976. But a provision to be effective, must "effect" something?—Yes.

3977. And as I understand you do not know a case in which it has effected the protection of a child from religious teaching to which its parents might object?—I have never heard of the parents objecting to the religious teaching in the schools that I have had to visit.

3978. Would you not rather say that it is inoperative, than that it is effective, if it is never put into operation?—I should not say that.

3979. How can you tell the effectiveness of a provision that is never used?—I do not know to what extent it may be used. All I say is that I have not seen more than one or two cases of children being withdrawn.

3980. How do you know that there is no desire for it?—So far as the school showed it there was none.

3981. But in order to discover that you must examine the parents, must you not?—But if the parents had objected I think I must have seen it in the schools.

3982. If the parents wished to use the conscience clause you mean that you would have seen the children withdrawn?—Yes.

3983. But supposing that the parents regarded the conscience clause as an ineffective instrument then you would not have seen the children withdrawn?—I cannot say.

3984. As a matter of fact, so far as you are aware, the conscience clause does not protect children, you have never seen children protected by it?—I have never seen children withdrawn in any number.

The following is the evidence of the Rev. T. W. Sharpe, another inspector, upon the same point.

6749. With regard to the conscience clause, you said that complaints by parents of the violation of the conscience clause had never reached you; are such complaints likely to reach the inspectors?—The ordinary process would be to complain to the Education Department direct, and the complaint would be remitted to the inspector, who would inquire into the case at once.

6750. Do you think that poor parents, especially in rural districts, are likely to find access to the Education Depart-

ment?—I have often said that I cannot find courage for all the cowards that exist.

6751. Should you regard it as a violation of the conscience clause if children attending a national school, and also attending the Church Sunday school, were charged lower fees than children who attended the national school but did not attend the Church Sunday school?—I think it would be better to charge uniform fees without respect to any religious denomination.

6752. Should you regard it as a violation of the conscience clause?—The words of the Act do not put that into the conscience clause, and therefore I should not.

6753. Managers can do that without bringing themselves within the reach of the law?—So far as I know they can.

The Rev. J. Duncan, secretary, gives the views of the National School Society on the same subject. Referring to a statement of his that a good many children asked for exemption on the days when the Catechism was taught, Dr. Dale asks :

10,971. All the witnesses that we have had hitherto have said that that is not so?—The number is small when compared with the entire number of children in Church schools; but still it shows the reality of the conscience clause. I believe there are 2,200 who ask for total exemption and are withdrawn from all religious instruction, and there are 5,690 withdrawn from a part of it. But it must be remembered that there are over 2,000,000 children on the registers.

10,972. The number of children withdrawn is extremely insignificant compared with the total number of children in your schools?—Practically it is about 8,000 withdrawn from the whole or part.

10,973. To go back to the point on which I asked you just now, do you think it is practically impossible to give religious teaching in your schools without teaching the characteristic doctrines of the English Church?—Certainly, I do not see how it can be got over; I think that in Church schools it is obvious that there must be Church teaching.

10,974. But then there are large districts of England where there is, and where there can be, only one school within reach of the children?—No doubt there are places where there is only one school.

10,975. Are there not very many such places?—Probably there are.

10,976. Where there ought to be only one school?—I do not admit the “ought.”

10,977. In the interest of education, is it not very desirable not to have a number of very small schools in a district?—I cannot separate education from the religious part of it. It seems to me that the religious part is the most essential part of education.

10,978. In any case are there not a very large number of districts in England where there is only one school?—Yes.

10,979. Do you think it fair that a school in such a district should have the strongly denominational character which must be attached necessarily to your schools, while yet it must be attended by the children of parents holding different religious views?—It seems to me inevitable. I have no doubt that the ideal thing would be that each religious body should have teaching according to its own views. Practically you cannot get that; the nearest approach to it is very desirable, and I do not see any reason why another body than the Church of England should not make the necessary sacrifices, get a building, and open a school and teach according to its own views. It can be done under the present law.

In the light of all this, it is of great importance that we should understand what idea the directors of Church schools have as to the kind of instruction which they may impart to schools which contain children gathered from all denominations. We direct, therefore, special attention to the evidence of Mr. Duncan as to the

RELIGIOUS TEACHING IN NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

10,925. To go to another point, you were asked a good deal about the relation of dogma to morals; is it not true

that the Church teaches that the moral law is based upon distinct revelation from God?—Certainly.

10,926. Is it not true that the Church teaches that the sanction for the moral law is to be found in revelation?—Certainly.

10,927. Is it not equally true that the spiritual helps by which this law is to be fulfilled are taught by revelation?—Yes.

10,928. That being the case, does not that establish the truth of the close connexion between the moral law and definite religious instruction?—They are bound up together.

10,929. They are bound up together intimately, so that you can scarcely imagine the moral law being fully practised without the helps afforded by religion?—No, certainly not.

10,930. Is it possible for children to be taught the Catechism and the formularies of the Church without also being taught why they are members of the Church of England?—No, the teaching of the Catechism of course involves the whole teaching of the Church.

10,931. Would it not be impossible to teach the children the Catechism and formularies fully and properly without at the same time letting them know why they are members of the Church of England? To put it in another way, do not the Catechism and formularies teach us why we are members of our Church?—Yes, certainly they do.

10,932. Then they could not be taught to a child without its being taught why it was a member of the Church, could they?—I cannot imagine a child who was a member of the Church of England being given religious teaching without having that fact fully explained to him.

10,933. The things are bound up together, are they not?—They are bound up together.

The above answers were given in reply to Mr. Alderson. Dr. Dale then took up the question.

10,963. Mr. Alderson goes on to enumerate some of the advantages of the denominational schools. But dismissing

that question, I should like to know what your views really are with regard to the relations of moral teaching to religious teaching. All moral teaching, in your judgment, should be based upon religious truths?—Yes.

10,964. But do you suppose that the religious truths upon which moral teaching should be based are those truths by which church is distinguished from church, or the truths which are held in common by nearly all the churches which profess to be Christian?—I do not see how you can pick and choose amongst doctrines which are equally true. Of course it is difficult to discuss first principles in this way, because one does not see in a moment all the bearings of a statement; but it seems to me that you cannot teach effectively without teaching the whole of what you believe to be true; and I do not see how you can decide amongst the religious truths you accept which are more important and which are less.

10,965. I do not wish to discuss the matter; I should probably agree very much with what you are saying; but I wanted to know what your own view was. Is such moral teaching as you would give to a child based upon the truths specially distinctive of a particular church, or is it based upon truths which are held in common by most Christian churches?—I do not know that I have studied very much the differences between different bodies, but I imagine that some truths are very generally held by all bodies, and that there are others which only the Church holds and which ought by no means to be kept back in teaching the children.

10,966. And the moral teaching in your schools would be partly rested upon those distinctive truths, you think?—Certainly.

10,967. Perhaps I might instance the doctrine of the grace given in baptism; that may be made the ground of moral teaching?—Our Catechism puts that in the very forefront, and I do not see how it can be evaded at all.

10,968. And yet you have a large number of children in your schools in country districts whose parents regard that doctrine with very great hostility, as you are aware?—I

am not aware that there is a very large number ; I have no doubt that there are those who do regard it with hostility.

10,969. Are you aware that evangelical Nonconformists generally do not accept the teaching of the English Church concerning the grace given in baptism?—I hardly know the extent to which it is accepted or refused. I am quite ready to believe that it is as you say ; probably you know the opinions of a large number of Nonconformists.

10,970. I was rather anxious to learn to what extent you felt it necessary to root the moral teaching given to all the children in your schools in a doctrine which would be regarded with very great antagonism by practically all evangelical Nonconformists?—I see nothing wrong in the schools of the Church in giving such teaching to all children who offer themselves and who do not wish to take advantage of the conscience clause. They may ask for total exemption from the religious instruction, or they may ask for exemption on days when the Catechism is taught. It is at their own option, and, in point of fact, in the schools of the Church there are a good many who do ask for exemption on the days when the Catechism is taught.

(To be continued.)

REVIEW.

DR. ALEXANDER.*

THE cases are rare in which the story of a Christian minister's life needs to be told at great length and with extreme elaboration. Now and then, as in the case of a man like Dr. Guthrie, who has been prominently associated with some historic movements, or one who like Norman Macleod has led a life of varied interest and many-sided activity, elaborate biographies are welcome. But though William Lindsay Alexander was in some respects as great as either of them, his friends have judged wisely in restricting the

* *W. Lindsay Alexander, D.D., LL.D. : His Life and Work. With Portrait.* (James Nisbet and Co.)

biography to this small volume, which, after all, contains a sufficiently full outline of his career. He was unquestionably in some departments one of the ablest scholars of his day. He was a preacher of recognized power and great eminence. He was, at all events after the death of Dr. Wardlaw, the one leader of Congregationalism in Scotland. But it was possible to be all this and yet not to supply material for an extended biography. It was pre-eminently so in Dr. Alexander's case. He was a man who shunned publicity, and though he did not shrink from taking his place in movements that deeply interested him, he could not be called a man of affairs. He was at home in the study, in the pulpit, in the professor's chair, or in the select circle of friends. But these are the spheres of which few records are preserved, and in which there is little to instruct or amuse the world. We do not suppose that he indulged in that wide correspondence in which some men seem to have so much delight. Indeed we cannot conceive of his giving himself to this kind of work. In some sense he was a religious leader in Scotland, but his was the quiet influence upon thought of which no chronicle can be kept, rather than the active guidance of the practical man which stands out before the public eye and finds a permanent record.

Mr. Ross, to whom we are indebted for this little volume, has therefore, in our judgment, done wisely in giving us the brief and modest sketch for which he makes to us unnecessary apology. It answers to its title, "William Lindsay Alexander," and tells the story of the man and his work, not of the times in which he lived or of the public events in which he was more or less an actor. There are certain points about which we should like to have heard somewhat more. The Morisonian movement, for example, which so materially affected the fortunes of Congregationalism in Scotland, and still more the great Free Church controversy, of course greatly interested Dr. Alexander, and in the former he must have exercised a very important influence. But it is very little that we hear of either. Probably it was better that any curiosity

in relation to the inner history of Morisonianism should not be gratified, as some of the parties concerned are still alive. Or it may be, indeed, that Dr. Alexander left no notes or memoranda which a biographer could use beyond the brief reference in his life of Dr. Wardlaw, which is quoted. The movement, however, affected so deeply the future of Congregationalism in Scotland, that it would have been interesting to know more of it and of the reasons which determined Dr. Alexander's own action in relation to it. To have entered into the discussion, however, would probably have revived painful feelings, and, as it would have been a departure from the plan of the book, we are not disposed to complain of the omission. Mr. Ross's object has been to make us know the man, and the portrait which he has drawn is at once striking and accurate.

The incidents in the story are not many nor striking. Dr. Alexander early entered into work, being a classical tutor at the old Blackburn Academy before he was twenty years of age. His course there was extremely honourable to himself. But the Academy was in a weak condition, and his services do not appear to have met the appreciation they deserved. After a time of unsettlement, he undertook for a short time the pastorate of Newington Chapel, Liverpool. But he does not seem to have had any purpose of permanent settlement there, and in 1835 he accepted an invitation to Edinburgh, which was henceforth the scene of his honoured labours. Many efforts were made to recall him to England. Some of the most honoured positions in the Congregational ministry there were offered to him, and it is tolerably clear from this narrative that had he consulted only his own inclinations, he would have accepted the earnest invitation to become the Principal of New College. But his people were engaged at the time in the erection of Augustine Church, and their leaders, specially Mr. Adam Black, strongly urged on him the duty of not deserting them in the midst of an undertaking so important. It was with reluctance that he yielded. But it may be doubted whether on this matter his friends

did not judge more wisely than himself. Edinburgh was his home. He was filled with its spirit, proud of its traditions, at home in its best social circles, eminently qualified to influence its life. And Edinburgh yielded him a large result. The great congregation which gathered round him, and which to a considerable extent was an assembly of Alexandrians rather than of Congregationalists, was far from being a complete index of the influence which he exerted. It is extremely questionable whether he could have gained any corresponding position in any English city. Dissenters in Scotland are treated with so much courtesy and consideration, that they are unable to realize the humiliations to which their English brethren are subject. But perhaps no one was so honoured as Dr. Alexander.

Possibly had Dr. Alexander had more extended experience of this kind he might have been saved from the Toryism into which he fell in later life, and which was so entirely opposed to his tendencies in his earlier years. In view of the position he afterwards took in politics, it is curious to find that when a young man at Blackburn "he devoted the time he could spare from his work to the preparation of an edition of the works of Dr. Van Wymperse on 'The Divinity of Christ,' and to speeches and letters on Parliamentary Reform, of which he was an ardent advocate." His biographer tells us that this was the only attack of political fever from which he ever suffered, and that even in these speeches there is a conservative element which developed more strongly in after years. We doubt whether the Conservatism was so apparent to those who heard him in 1831 as it is to us who read his words under the influence of the ideas of to-day, and we doubt even more whether that Conservatism, such as it was, would have ripened into high Toryism had Dr. Alexander spent his days amid the conditions of Non-conformist life on this side the border. We have often said that Scotch Dissenters do not know what an Establishment is, and perhaps Congregationalists know less of it even than Presbyterian dissenters. They occupy a position aloof from the ecclesiastical struggles of the country, and,

if truth must be told, they are not sufficiently formidable to excite any alarm. Presbyterians in England are in a somewhat similar condition, and there are some of them, we believe, who fancy that the Established Church regards them with more favour than other Dissenters. There could be no greater mistake. All who have not the grace (whatever it be) of Episcopal orders are in the same condemnation, and the intensity of the antagonism shown towards us is in exact ratio to the power we are supposed to wield. How far Dr. Alexander might have been affected by the surroundings of a Congregational minister in England, especially when coming to them from his more genial environment, we do not undertake even to conjecture. One thing is certain. He had a status in Edinburgh such as no Dissenting minister has in this country, or can have while the law remains as it is.

For the Doctor had not only the friendship both of the Established and non-established clergy, exchanging pulpits and cultivating the most kindly relations with both, but he was as a king in the city, to whom men of all classes looked up with respect and affection. We have been told that no outsider can have any adequate conception of the unique position which he held. Nevertheless, when he became a candidate for the chair of Moral Philosophy in succession to Dr. John Wilson, even he found that his Congregationalism put him at a disadvantage, but in this he experienced a very common fate. His opponent was an able and accomplished professor of the Free Church, and Free Church influence naturally inclined to his side. But this indicated rather a strong Free Church bias than any lack of appreciation for Dr. Alexander, who probably would have been better advised had he not exposed himself to such a defeat. It is, indeed, very hard to picture him, with his dignified bearing, engaged in a personal canvass of the Town Council of Edinburgh, mainly composed, as such a body must necessarily be, of men who had not the remotest idea of what Moral Philosophy meant, and what type of man its professor ought to be. An amusing illustration of this is given by the biographer.

To one of these gentlemen Dr. Alexander paid a visit at his shop, and found him engaged in a lively "higgling" with a customer over a pair of boots or shoes which she wished to purchase, but thought the price too high. The worthy tradesman having learned his visitor's business, ejaculated his views regarding the appointment at such intervals as his talkative customer allowed him. "A most important subject, Moral Philosophy, Doctor—Na, my woman, I could na' gie ye them for a penny less!—We maun be cautious, Doctor, about this appointment; we need a man that is soond in his views.—They're cheap at the price, I assure ye, Mrs. —!" And the candidate had to resign himself to the humiliation of listening to the "patron's" views on Moral Philosophy, expressed at such intervals as he and his customer allowed in the more serious business of selling and buying a pair of shoes! To another councillor, a veterinary surgeon, he paid a visit, at the house of the latter. After "cooling his heels," as he said, for about an hour in waiting for the convenience of that gentleman, the surgeon appeared, and good-naturedly apologized for his delay. "The fact is, Doctor, I was awa' attending a coo!—the *ladies* first, ye ken, Doctor!" And yet such humiliating work was absolutely necessary if a candidate resolved to do his utmost to secure the appointment.

Dr. Alexander's whole career in Edinburgh is a very striking example of the power of personal ability and character. It would perhaps be an exaggeration to say that he enjoyed extended popularity. This was not what he sought, and he had hardly the qualities necessary to secure it, or, at all events in later years, did not care to exercise them. The glowing rhetoric which characterized his early sermons and speeches was severely chastened in after life, when his appeals were made chiefly to the reason of the more cultured part of the community. It would have been impossible for him at any time to stoop to any low or vulgar arts in order to win the transient favour of the unthinking multitude. His native shyness and reserve also must have served to restrict his influence, although there are abundant proofs in this brief sketch that amongst the humbler members of his Church there were many who had a high appreciation for his intellectual worth and strong appreciation of him as a friend and pastor. It was, however, undoubtedly among the more intelligent portion of the community that his influence was felt, and it was due entirely to the weight of his personal character and

work. He was an accomplished scholar, a profound and careful thinker, and withal, to those who were admitted to his friendship, a most lovable man. His noble form and somewhat regal bearing always gave an impression of strength which was abundantly sustained by his character and conduct. The portraiture drawn in this volume is singularly true to the life. Among the most interesting chapters of the book is that which contains three separate sketches, one of his domestic life by Miss E. T. Maclaren, another of his habits and attainments as a scholar by Dr. Donaldson, and a third of his conduct as a professor. In truth, this narrative throughout is marked by a graphic vividness which is not only full of charm, but which also gives us a much truer idea of the man and his work than we should have gained from any mere collection of diaries, journals, and correspondence. It is full of life from beginning to end, and the illustrative stories are as numerous as they are instructive. They are illustrations in the best sense of the term, not mere stories dragged in for the sake of telling them.

A PLEA FOR UNION.

THE Burnley election is so serious a blow for the Unionists that we do not wonder that their representatives endeavour to minimize or explain it away. But the hard facts cannot be altered. There has been considerable discussion as to the drift of opinion in the constituencies, and strong assertions have been made on both sides, one party insisting that the country was gradually inclining towards Mr. Gladstone, while the other was equally positive that it was moving in the opposite direction. We have not ourselves been able to understand the grounds on which these confident statements were made, and have been watching the indications of public opinion. The Liverpool election told, up to a certain point, in favour of the former view. Every one expected Mr. Goschen would win, because the prestige which he brought with him and his excep-

tional fitness for uniting both sections of the party. But he failed to do more than reduce the Liberal majority by a few more than the number of votes transferred from other districts of the city in the hope of turning the balance in Exchange Ward. To put it in the most moderate way, the election gave no indication that "Unionism" was growing. For reasons which we need not particularize, the contest in St. George's, Hanover Square, proved nothing. The Burnley election was therefore an extremely critical one. The appeal was made to a popular constituency which returned a "Liberal Unionist" in July last. Under any condition this party stood to lose in February, but they rallied manfully to the aid of the Tory on whom Lord Hartington bestowed his benediction, and the result has been a crushing defeat which, if it means anything, means that the electors are recovering from the panic of last summer; and if a few of the leaders still hold fast by their allegiance to Lord Hartington, they are being deserted by the rank and file of their previous supporters.

It is not our intention to indulge in a jubilant strain about a victory over those who have been our friends, and who, we hope, will be our friends again. Our voice is for peace, and we use this incident to emphasize our suggestions. One of the first essentials to a better understanding between the two sections is that dissentient Liberals should get rid of the idea that the followers of Mr. Gladstone have no independent opinion. Mr. Bright has recently told Mr. Gladstone, with more bluntness than courtesy, that his "unwisdom" has divided the Liberal party, and all who agree with him are treated as unreasoning and ignorant individuals, who have no opinion and no right to form one. It is an unfortunate style of controversy, which never has produced, and never can produce, any good.

The results of the last election showed that the Liberal party were not blindly following their leader. Indeed we have seldom, if ever, known so much independence in the formation of opinions on any subject. Elections like that at Burnley show that some who then doubted are being converted by the sheer force of events. Time will prove

whether the unwisdom is on the part of Mr. Gladstone or of his opponents. For the present it is becoming increasingly manifest that the Irish question cannot be settled on any lines as yet laid down by the Liberal Unionists, and that the present delay is secured at a heavy cost to the cause of progress. It may not be superfluous to point out some of the considerations which incline the great mass of the Liberal party to believe that in this, as in other points, Mr. Gladstone has shown that foresight and sagacity which have made him the first of living statesmen.

There was a charming frankness in the avowal made by Mr. E. Beckett, one of the young bloods of the Tory party, in the debate on the Address, which was extremely refreshing and, at the same time, very instructive. "The law of nature is that the weakest must go to the wall" was the doctrine laid down by this interesting gentleman. He applied it to the case of the Irish tenant; but it is the essence of Toryism, which never fails to carry it out wherever it has opportunity. At present it would seem to be a somewhat dangerous maxim to lay down. At least the party who proclaim it can hardly complain of Socialists for their physical force demonstrations, which are really intended to prove that they are not the weakest, and that they do not mean to go to the wall without knowing the reason why. The event would probably prove that the organized forces of society were too strong for them, but the conflict is one which no wise man would say a word to provoke. In the insolence of power, however, this young Tory blurts out a principle which lies at the root of his creed, but which many of its professors do not care to look at themselves, much less to drag forth to the gaze of scoffing Liberals. The primary object of true Liberalism, on the other hand, is to guard the rights of the weak, and (if we are to accept the interpretation of its principles as given by some of its most recent and most enlightened teachers) is to go somewhat in excess of the line of right, and so help the weak as to give them better chances in life. The great object of the school of politicians of which Mr. Chamberlain may, we hope, still be regarded as a

leader, is to provide that none shall be forced to the wall by mere weakness. Free schools, labourers' allotments, reforms in the land laws, are all so many expedients adopted with this view.

We venture to think, Lord Hartington notwithstanding, that Home Rule is a consistent application of this fundamental maxim of Liberalism to Ireland.

What Liberal (he asked, with an air of confident triumph) last year subscribed to the doctrine that a small minority of the people of these kingdoms was to govern and control the will of the vast majority? What Liberal ever gave his assent to the doctrine that the supremacy of Parliament was not the best security for the freedom and liberty of every inhabitant of these kingdoms? What Liberal ever assented to the opinion that Parliament was incapable of doing equal justice between the inhabitants of the three kingdoms wherever they might be found?

The argument in the first two questions is fair, and the conclusion would be irresistible, provided we were once satisfied as to the composition of the State of which the majority and the minority are constituent elements. It is of the very essence of Liberalism that the will of the people should be supreme, but to assume that this settles the merits of the Irish question is to leave out of sight the facts out of which the entire difficulty arises. Great Britain and Ireland form one United Kingdom, but it will hardly be pretended that the union is part of the eternal order of things. Ardent Unionists assert that Ireland is not a nation, and cannot claim to be treated as such. But, at all events, up to the beginning of the present century it had its own Legislature, and lost it by no act of its own. The predecessors of Lord Hartington, the men who then represented plain Whig principles, were as much opposed to the Union as his Lordship is resolute in its defence, and their opposition was certainly justified, not only by the difficulties inseparable from any scheme of legislative union between two peoples so unequal in every respect, but even more by the methods employed to coerce or bribe the weaker people into submission. We are continually told that this is ancient

history. It is not yet a century since the injustice was done, and it is assumed that mere lapse of time has buried the wrong beneath the waters of Lethe. And this in face of the fact, which does not strike us as at all surprising, that the two great nations of Western Europe are at this hour confronting each other in bitter hate because of a quarrel about territory whose origin dates much further back. Unfortunately, what we are quick enough to see in the case of others we are unable to perceive when we have to deal with our own national affairs. But the original fault in the establishment of the Irish Union remains to bear fruit to-day, just as much as the old dispute about Alsace and Lorraine embitters the relations of France and Germany. We cannot make history ancient at our pleasure; or, to put it somewhat differently, ancient history has a very awkward habit of producing modern difficulties. In truth Englishmen, especially Englishmen of the Hartington type, would laugh to scorn the idea that eighty-six years had made any essential alteration in the conditions of a political problem. If Austria had maintained her hold on Venetia and Lombardy for that period, we should not have assented to the notion that all controversy was at an end as to the origin of her title. So with Ireland. Eighty-six years of legal union have not obliterated the original distinctions. The union is still between Great Britain and Ireland, and as the former has an enormous advantage in point of numbers, so that if all Ireland were on one side her voice would count for nothing, it is not clear that in this case the absolute rule of the majority is in such perfect harmony with Liberal principles as Lord Hartington assumes. On the contrary, this looks very much more like the Tory maxim as laid down by Mr. Beckett.

Happily we seem to be in the "reflective period," and there may therefore be some chance of getting a hearing for considerations of this kind. Ireland has long been a trouble which has not only wearied English patience, but has provoked English passion and indignation. If there are faults in our national conduct, they are not without extenuation, and there are some redeeming features.

England has meant to deal fairly with Ireland, and in recent years has been honestly seeking to carry out that purpose. But these good intentions have not succeeded in producing even a conciliatory temper on the opposite side. This failure naturally causes irritation; but ought it not rather to lead to inquiry as to the cause of such a result? The Legislature has done more to meet the wishes of Ireland than of any other part of the Empire. How is it that Ireland is the one dissatisfied section of the Commonwealth? English Dissenters are snubbed at every point, whereas Ireland enjoys religious equality. The Irish tenant has a consideration which his English brother has never enjoyed; nay, so marked and recognized has been the difference in the treatment of the two countries, that when special concessions have been made to Ireland it has been distinctly announced that they were not to be quoted as a precedent for England. Unfortunately the effect of this wiser treatment has always been neutralized by administrative action conceived in a hostile spirit, and marked by that discreditable dodging for which Dublin Castle has become notorious. Take the matter of jury packing, which called forth the extraordinary protest from the Roman Catholic clergy which appeared on the same morning as Lord Hartington's speech at Newcastle, and which has subsequently elicited manifestations of Roman Catholic opinion even more ominous and threatening. We do not profess to decide as to the sufficiency of the technical pleas advanced by the Government in their own defence. What we do say is, that such proceedings would not be tolerated in England or Scotland for a single week, and that so long as they go on in Ireland it is folly to talk of the countries being governed on the same principles. We wonder whether Lord Hartington supposes that his apology for—or should we not rather say his defence of?—them is in harmony with those Liberal principles of which he claims to be the special exponent. It would be infinitely better to abolish trial by jury altogether than to turn it into a mockery by so manipulating the formation of juries that an Orangeman convicted on plainest evidence is allowed to go scot-free while Nationalists

feel that they are deprived of those chances which the law is intended to secure even for the greatest criminal by the constitution of a fair tribunal for the trial of his cause. It may be said that Nationalists or Radicals or even Catholics will not convict those of a similar persuasion, but the acquittal of the Belfast rioter is a proof that Orangemen are afflicted with the same weakness, and suggests that they will be as unwilling to acquit an opponent as to convict a friend. The practical outcome, however reluctant many may be to face it, is that if the present system is to be maintained Ireland must be governed as a Crown Colony. It is so at present, for though the forms of law are maintained, its spirit is violated. The Solicitor-General assured the House that he had a firm belief in trial by jury. But to talk of trial by jury when one party is able to control the jury list and assure a verdict, is to keep the promise to the ear and break it to the heart. The chief advantage of keeping up these constitutional forms when the spirit has been taken out of them, is only to blind the English people as to the fact that Ireland is not governed as England and Scotland are governed.

It is the recognition of this which is affecting the minds of many who have no special leaning towards Home Rule. They have been very slow to understand that the refusal of it must be followed by the withdrawal of the Constitution from Ireland. Among the impossible things in politics, nothing is less possible than to govern a people in opposition to their own wishes, and at the same time secure them such liberties and rights as our present Constitution secures for Ireland. But to reduce Ireland to a Crown Colony would be to give up everything for which Liberal Unionists have contended. Even they, therefore, should seek the solution of the problem in some other way, and with such a man as Lord Herschell seeking to bring about an accommodation we cannot doubt that a plan may yet be found which will satisfy all Liberals except those whose Unionism has already gone into Conservatism.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

A VERY remarkable meeting was held in connection with Union Chapel, Islington, on Thursday, February 17th. Dr. Allon has been able to maintain an amount of Church life which, in the Metropolis at all events, is exceedingly rare, and he had the reward of his wise pastoral administration in the gathering of which we speak. After forty-three years of continuous labour, he not only wields the influence which so long and able a pastorate was sure to bring, but he kindles a strong personal enthusiasm which younger men may well covet. This was evident in the spirit which characterized the assembly, as well as in the zeal and liberality with which the Church and congregation have entered on the new and (as many would deem it) heavy responsibility which they have undertaken. Union Chapel, opened in December, 1877, as most of our readers know, has not been fully complete. Internally there is nothing to be desired, but externally it waits for the erection of the tower, without which full justice cannot be done to its architectural pretensions. It is proposed now to supply this deficiency, and at the same time to purchase the freehold from the proprietor, the Marquis of Northampton, who, fortunately, is willing to dispose of it for a price which, if high, is not unreasonable. The total amount required to cover the expenditure on these two objects, and at the same time to pay the portion of the debt remaining on the building, is £7,500. The deacons, in proposing to the meeting the immediate removal of all these obligations, were able to announce that they and a few friends whose aid they had sought had already raised £4,000, and before the meeting was over this was increased to upwards of £5,000. As three years are proposed for the payment, and as the weekly offerings for the building fund since January, 1878, have amounted to £9,893, an average of nearly £1,100 a year, it will be seen that but a small sum is required in the way of additional subscriptions to complete the required amount. This is a magnificent

result, especially when we remember that it marks the close of an effort extending over a long period. During the forty-three years of Dr. Allon's pastorate, as appears from the annual reports, the Church at Union Chapel has raised, for religious and benevolent purposes, £215,149. The expenditure on new buildings has been £41,153. This external activity has not been at the cost of the spiritual work of the Church. It has only been one sign of its vigorous and energetic life. The admissions to the Church up to the end of 1886 have been 3,283 ; the Sunday and mission-schools number 3,644 scholars with 272 teachers. The zeal of the Church in mission work is well known. It has three mission stations, the most important being that at Spitalfields with its 2,000 scholars, 120 teachers, and 75 communicants. Such a record of work and success ought to be an inspiration and encouragement to others. Not only his own Church but the churches of the country will rejoice with our honoured friend, and devoutly praise God for the grace given to him and his fellow-labourers. Two points deserve special notice in connection with this history. First, Dr. Allon is always emphatic in his acknowledgments of what he owes to his deacons. A pastor with our friend's high reputation, his grasp of mind, energetic spirit, and power as a preacher, is a great force, but without the co-operation of spirited and enterprising deacons much of his power for usefulness will be lost. Union Chapel has been greatly blessed in its deacons. The second point is equally important. The noble amount which has been raised of course includes some large contributions; but this great sum has to a very considerable extent been a gathering in of the littles. The people have given willingly, according to their ability. Congregationalism may point thankfully to such a manifestation of its power. May the pastor be spared for many years to a people so worthy of him, and may the prosperity of the future surpass even that of the past !

Dr. Parker's visit to Edinburgh and Glasgow is an event of considerable significance. The reception accorded to our friend, who was welcomed as a distinguished representative

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not only of English Congregationalism, but of the Evangelical pulpit, must have surpassed even his most sanguine expectations. He was, in truth, a lion of the time. He preached in churches connected with the Establishment, the Free Church, the United Presbyterians, as well as those of his own denomination, and in every instance not only did the congregations crowd the places of worship, but there were numbers who could not obtain admission. But this remarkable testimony to the power and popularity of the preacher was the least suggestive feature of these remarkable gatherings. They impress us chiefly as a noble manifestation of true catholic unity, and they are all the more striking in this respect because of their contrast with the action of the Episcopal Church both in our own country and in Scotland. At the very time when Presbyterians and Congregationalists, as well as other bodies of Christians, were proving that union was possible by uniting, Convocation was protesting in loudest tones against the terrible evils that must certainly result from an interchange of pulpits between the clergy and the ministers of the Free Churches. The imbecility of much of the talk in which these ecclesiastics indulged (the canons, who seem to have multiplied greatly of late years, being specially conspicuous for the arrogance of their temper and the feebleness of their reasoning) really places it beyond the range of argument. It is scarcely possible to enter into rational discussion with a gentleman who talks about 223 sects, and reasons as though freedom to clergymen to associate with others of congenial spirit means an obligation to fraternize with all and sundry who may demand it, or who on a question of this gravity can perpetrate so miserable a pun as the following. In answer to the question, "Where is truth?" one will point here and another there, *Voilà, Voy-sey*. Seldom has Convocation shown so clearly how entirely it is dominated by a mediæval ecclesiasticism. Even in Edinburgh itself an illustration was being given of a similar spirit, in Bishop Dowden's interference with Canon Fleming, who had actually undertaken to deliver a lecture on a Sunday evening in a Presbyterian

Church. Of course the bishop had no right of interference whatever, and Canon Fleming's submission to his ridiculous scruples speaks more for his courtesy than for his courage. On this point we speak with reserve, as we are absolutely unqualified to pronounce as to the amount of deference which an English canon owes to a bishop of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, whose clergy always seem to forget that in that country it is but a sect. We propose in our next number to deal with the whole question as growing out of the correspondence between Canon Wilberforce and the Bishop of Winchester. In the meantime, there are numbers of outsiders who will not be slow to mark the contrast between these English ecclesiastics and the extraordinary gatherings in Edinburgh and Glasgow. In the latter, at all events, it was evident that these Christians, however many and grave might be their differences (and there was no attempt to gloss these over by words which sound well but mean little), they at least realized that their points of union were far more vital, and that they had a deep and living sympathy with one another in their great Christian work. Especially was this manifest in the very significant and deeply interesting conferences on evangelical preaching. Dr. Parker has scored a great success, but we trust he has done something far better, given an impetus to true Catholicity and the earnest preaching of the gospel of Christ.

Dissenters, especially those who are of the Unionist persuasion, or have decided Unionist tendencies, would do well to mark how seriously they, and the questions in which they are most deeply interested, are affected by the present state of political parties. Here is the Home Secretary—the Roman Catholic lawyer whom it suited the purpose of Lord Randolph Churchill to pitchfork into that high place, and whose own purpose it did not suit to leave it when his patron abandoned the Cabinet—intent on signalizing his tenure of an office he ought never to have occupied, by a raid in favour of the clergy and their burial fees. In many Burial Boards, especially in rural districts,

there is a determination not to allow the consecration of any part of their cemeteries. At first sight this appears to be hard, and if the question were one of conscience we must pronounce in opposition to these Boards. Now that the restrictions in the use of consecrated ground are removed, we are quite content that the whole should be consecrated. But this is really not the point at issue. It is a question of fees and of fees only, and so zealous is the Home Secretary on behalf of his clerical clients, that he refused even to wait the result of a Bill which has been introduced into the House with a view of settling the irritating controversy which has arisen out of the provision in the present law by which the parish priest is able to claim his fee for any interment in the consecrated part of a cemetery, and proceeded at once to apply for a mandamus in the case of the Attleborough Board. That body has shown itself quite equal to the occasion, and by its skilful countermove has obtained the delay which Mr. Secretary Matthews haughtily refused to concede. Our Unionist friends should remember that they have foisted this gentleman upon us, and as they are admitted to have a dominant influence over the Government, we are justified in asking that they employ it for the prevention of such vagaries as these.

As bearing on the same point, it is instructive to note that the one point on which Mr. Goschen was strong and emphatic, beside the maintenance of the present legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, was the preservation of the existing relations between Church and State. He did not hold public meetings in his canvass of his present constituency, but in the hole and corner gatherings of the few friends to whom he unfolded his griefs he took care to protest against Disestablishment. Irishmen and Dissenters are bracketed together, and it is the business of all good Tories to put them both down. For the present, indeed, the Irish question serves the very useful purpose of keeping all English reforms, and especially the question of religious equality, in the background. It is not very profitable to inquire who

is to blame. Putting aside angry attacks and recriminations, which can serve no good purpose, it is high time that true Liberals, and especially those of them who are interested in ecclesiastical questions, should recognize that their dissensions are playing the game of obstruction, or even reaction, far more effectually than all the efforts of the Primrose League. We as Nonconformists are entitled to appeal to our leaders on both sides, and ask them how long this arrest of all progressive and beneficent legislation is to go on. There is even worse than this, for a Tory Administration, if slow to do good, is sure to work not a little evil. Its influence is felt in every department, and the effects remain long after the régime itself is over. The one consolation is that the reaction which is pretty sure to follow carries measures for which otherwise we might have had to wait long. Even the present depression is not unfavourable to the advance of sober Radicalism, and when the turn in the tide comes, Disestablishment is pretty certain to be one of the first reforms embraced in the Liberal programme. Our present duty is to educate and to be on the watch against any movements of a retrogressive character.

Mr. Peter Rylands, who has just passed away (a victim possibly to the anxieties and toils of the unhappy controversies of the last year), had a connection with Nonconformity in his earlier days which seems to have escaped the notice of those who have written about him. We knew him well when he was an ardent, enthusiastic youth, some years our senior, and therefore looked up to with proper deference and admiration. Even then he was full of ideas which he was never slow to bring out, and certainly never failed to assert with sufficient confidence and dogmatism. But he was always frank and kind. One of his first efforts in the way of reform was made in a little book entitled, we believe, "The Pulpit and the People," and intended to correct the errors of Dissenting churches; and our own first contribution to denominational literature was a criticism of the little volume in the *Biblical Review*

of that time, a precursor of our own *Congregational*. It was certainly not surprising that he should have conceived a distaste for Dissenting chapels and their usages, for if there was a place calculated to inspire such a feeling, it was the old chapel in which he had been brought up, and of which his father was a leading member. It was one of the barn-like structures in which the Nonconformity of a former generation had its home. It was our fortune to preach there in our student days, and the impression of its sombre dreariness and its utter desolation remains with us still. Yet those gloomy old walls had resounded with the echoes of one of the most eloquent voices in the Congregational ministry, for it was there that Alfred John Morris spent his earlier years. Even he, however, did not succeed in imparting life to the feeble little church. When we hear people talk of the good old times, we contrast some of these scenes of the past with the changed aspects of our Congregational life in the same places. Warrington has now a handsome and well-filled chapel, and an active congregation. Mr. Ryland *père* was generally known in the district as "King John." He was a fine specimen of an old English gentleman, a decided Nonconformist and a sturdy Calvinist as well, imperious and sometimes impracticable, of strong individuality and great force of character. There was an aroma of culture about the home which always reminded us of the accounts of such families as the Taylors. Mr. Peter Rylands was a man of great alertness of mind. He had read widely, and his views on public questions were formed with intelligence. His Parliamentary career was not so successful as might have been anticipated from his undoubted ability and his services to the Liberal party. It might seem as though the late Prime Minister did not take precisely the same view of his merits and position as he did himself, and the result was a feeling of disappointment of which some men in the House were not slow to take advantage. We are reluctant to write a hard word of whom so much might be said that is good, but justice to Mr. Gladstone compels us to say that the somewhat contemptuous reference to our "old friend Peter," of which so much has

been made, had abundant provocation. In the familiar talk of the smoking room and the lobby Mr. Rylands was outspoken and severe in his criticisms upon his leader, and, if these reached Mr. Gladstone's ears, it is not a matter of astonishment that he did not regard his assailant with great favour.

The division on Mr. Richard's extremely modest proposal that Mr. Dillwyn should be allowed the night which he had with difficulty secured for his motion on Welsh Disestablishment has attracted considerable attention. At first sight it might seem as though the incident was unfavourable to the prospects of Liberal reunion. It was a very small thing for the Welsh people and their advocates to ask, but the Liberalism of the Unionists was not sufficient to lead them to sustain the request. Hence the joy in Conservative circles seems to be very great. A writer from the "Inner Lobby" speaks thus in *The Times* :

Yet only four Liberal Unionists, two of them being Welsh members, and one a Unionist merely in name, could be found to support the amendment, while no fewer than 38 supported the Government, giving it for the second time this Session a majority of over 100 on a crucial division; and these 38 included Mr. John Bright, one of the most pronounced, as he is certainly the most revered, of Liberationists, and Mr. Caine, also a very prominent and influential member of the Liberationist party.

No doubt this has a discouraging aspect. It suggests that some of the dissentient Liberals hope, that by steadily refusing to vote for any Liberal measure until this Irish question is out of the way, they may get it settled on their own lines. But we must beware of attributing motives, and Mr. Caine's defence of his action, unsatisfactory as it is, shows, at least, that he has no desire to perpetuate the present dissensions. It is still more gratifying to find that Mr. Chamberlain's name does not appear in the division list on Mr. Richard's motion, and it is a point in his favour that Mr. Bright disclaims all knowledge of his efforts at reconciliation, and clearly has no sympathy with them. It is

clear also that he has grasped the true idea of the "Liberal Unionist" position. "*We have*" (Mr. Chamberlain says in his letter to the promoters of the new Liberal Union) "*in the first place to give evidence of our continued attachment to Liberal principles, and our anxiety to see them applied practically in legislation affecting the whole of the United Kingdom.*" Had this view prevailed, the Unionists must have voted for Mr. Richard, and even had his motion been carried we cannot see that any damage would have accrued even to the Government. They would have lost a night for which they could easily have recouped themselves by suppressing some needless speeches on their own side.

Perhaps there has been nothing which has stirred so much feeling as this unfortunate vote. But it will do good if it brings home the conviction that the evil of present divisions is so extreme that there must be some attempt at cure. It may be a very desirable thing to put down Irish Nationalists, and yet some even of the "Unionists," especially if they be Radicals, may hesitate as to the price which has to be paid for the luxury. It is bad enough to have to give such votes, but the dislocation of parties is even worse. However undesirable it may be to have a separate Parliament at College Green, even though its powers were strictly limited by statute, it is surely worse to have the great "mother of Parliaments" at Westminster humiliated and robbed of the power so hardly won. The humiliation of which we speak is not that inflicted by Irish obstructives, but by those who, in their determination to crush them and to refuse their demands, seem prepared to sacrifice the authority and dignity of Parliament by leaving the direction of public affairs in the hands of a Government whose intrinsic qualities do not command confidence, and which is practically released from the proper control of Parliament in consequence of the attitude of a section of the Opposition. Why Lord Hartington has not accepted the responsibility of office, seeing that he wields the power, is not easily explained. But the con-

sequence is that we have the leadership of the House turned into something little short of burlesque. Mr. W. H. Smith, as leader, talking about his authority, is amusing. Mr. Matthews, as Home Secretary, carrying on the Administration in the spirit of the Primrose League, is a more grave and serious spectacle, not without its element of menace and alarm. Surely when men, who tell us that they are still Liberals, see the performances of a Government which could not exist for a week without their support, they must have some doubts as to whether their present line of action is either politic or patriotic. Our care has always been rather for the interests of Liberalism than for the adoption of any particular solution of the Irish problem; and it is with the same feeling that we write now. Mr. Bright tells us that reforms he had hoped to see accomplished during his life-time are indefinitely postponed. We have but little faith in these pessimist prophecies; but if there is any truth in the forecast, does it not furnish all the stronger reason for an endeavour to end the present unnatural dissensions? It becomes increasingly manifest that if Ireland is not to have such measure of self-government as is compatible with the maintenance of Imperial supremacy, she must be deprived of constitutional rights altogether. The English people will never consent to that, and true wisdom will seek some plan of accommodation instead of persisting in a *non possumus* which presses more severely upon England than Ireland, and which while it lasts must be fatal to every hope of progress.

THE series of articles in reply to Lord Selborne's work on Disestablishment has been interrupted since the appearance of the introductory paper, by the pressure of other matter, but it will be resumed next month, and continued in successive numbers. The article in April will treat with Church and Dissent and their relations to each other in this country.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

The People's Bible. By JOSEPH PARKER, D.D. Vol. V. Joshua-Judges v. (Hazell, Watson, and Viney.) Dr. Parker makes steady progress in the gigantic work he has undertaken, and each new volume only serves more fully to vindicate him from any charge of undue boldness in his design. His commentary is a book *sui generis*, and bears on every page unmistakable traces of its authorship. A great scholar, capable of doing for the Old Testament what Westcott has done for the writings of John, and Lightfoot for some of the Epistles of Paul, would doubtless have produced a different book, but it is open to doubt whether it would have been as useful, and certainly it would not have been so popular. We have no desire even to suggest a comparison between such different types of commentary. They move on parallel, not on the same lines, they are adapted to diverse classes of readers, they do an entirely different style of work. Dr. Parker appeals to the common sense of the people. We do not mean by this that even scholars and teachers may not find much both of instruction and profit in his volumes. On the contrary, we are satisfied that there are numbers of ministers who will find in them stores of hidden treasure. Indeed this is one of the faults we should find in relation to some sections of the work. Take, for example, the brief paragraphs to which Dr. Parker has given the somewhat quaint title of "Handfuls of purpose." They are, in fact, very full outlines, which would serve as skeletons of admirable sermons. With a very little trouble a preacher might work out of them discourses which a congregation would assuredly pronounce to be extremely thoughtful, and by which he might obtain the credit of great originality, although in fact he had contributed nothing but a little illustration and expansion of Dr. Parker's suggestions. Of course this is infinitely better than the filling up of Simeon's skeletons, or whatever other book may do duty in our own time and among those who are not of the strict Evangelical cult for those well-worn crutches of many a ministerial "Ready-to-halt" in the past. But it is to be hoped that there are others who will put the book to much nobler uses, and those who take it up with this view will be well repaid. It is a work of indisputable genius, and almost, as a matter of course, has points in it to which those on whom the Divine gift has not been bestowed, but who instead of it have a certain fastidiousness of taste, or a profound reverence for the accepted canons of theological criticism, will be sure to take exception. Genius is apt to strike out paths of its own which to minds of a more prosaic character appear to be extremely dangerous or wildly erratic. But it does a work of its own, and a work as valuable as it is rare. There is inspiration in genius, and that is just what sympathetic minds will find here.

But while ministers and students may thus come to prize these remarkable discourses on books of Scripture in which hitherto they may have found but little material for sermons, the leading characteristics of the book correspond to its title. It is distinctively the "People's Bible," and the kind of Bible which the people specially want at the present time. To questions which are heard on every side from Christian believers as well as from sceptics as to the value of the Old Testament here is an answer which appeals to the ordinary intelligence. Dr. Parker develops the wisdom which is in the Book, and no more effective reply could be given to those who would fain regard the Jewish Scriptures as among the things which, as they have decayed and waxed old, are now to vanish away. The form may be transient, but the spirit is immortal, and in these old stories are revelations of a Divine purpose and teaching of a Divine wisdom which are as necessary for Englishmen of the nineteenth century as they were for the old Hebrews. These men of the distant past, but just emerging out of darkness and bondage, wanderers in the wilderness, or settlers in a land which they had received from God for an inheritance, living in the early stages of the world's training, and enjoying only the beginnings of the Divine teachings, had nevertheless the same nature as ours, hearts throbbing with the same passions and exposed to the same temptations, souls agonizing in struggles such as we pass through still. So we can come and, even in these pages which seem to belong to an old world that is gone, we find a guidance or a consolation which is suited to the needs of the hour. What Dr. Parker has done, and done with such remarkable success, is to bring out this hidden wisdom. The Book must have been his constant companion, and he must have studied it in all its relations to human character and life. He shows a wide knowledge of human nature, as well as a penetrating insight into the spiritual meaning of the record. And the result is this series of expositions and discourses, marked by great breadth and depth of thought, richness of illustration, a rare combination of intellectual qualities, and, above all, a deep spiritual feeling and purpose which pervades the whole. In some sense they may be regarded as an "Apologia" for the Old Testament. How could there be a better than this remarkable development of the wisdom which it contains? We may ask, as the Jewish objectors asked in relation to the great Master, "Whence hath this people this learning?" It is not the gift of culture, or it would have been possessed in far larger degree by the Athenians. A sceptical writer, of what must now be regarded as the last generation, said that the Jews did for religion what the Greeks did for philosophy and art. But then how came they to do it? They contributed nothing to general literature, and, apart from the Bible, would have been unknown in the literary world. How is it that their one Book towers so high above all other books? This is the question which is accentuated in all these discourses, and in thus presenting it Dr. Parker has

done enormous service in the field of Christian evidence as well as of practical instruction.

History of Israel. By HEINRICH EWALD. Vol. VIII. (Longmans, Green & Co.) It would be superfluous for us to attempt to enlarge upon the almost unexampled position taken by Ewald as a great Biblical scholar, and it will be impossible to discuss at all the merits of the great work of which this is the concluding volume. Suffice it to say that for profundity of research, for wide and varied information, for originality of view, and for keenness of criticism, the history of the people of Israel can hardly be said to have an equal. The index to the entire work, which is given in this closing volume, has a singular value because, as it is well said in the prefatory note, the work itself is really an encyclopædia of Biblical learning. It is only necessary to glance over the index in order to see how wide the field that is covered, and how elaborate and careful has been the examination of the most minute points of detail. This quality of painstaking is one of the chief characteristics of great German critics. But in none is it more marked than in Ewald. The present volume treats of the post-apostolic age, including the period from the fall of Jerusalem to the last Judean wars. The period covers a space of about seventy years, and was practically a time of transition. Judaism was waging its last conflict with the mighty power of Rome, while, on the other hand, Christianity was pushing on its spiritual conquests, and gradually taking to itself the external form of organization in which it has come down to us. On every side there is stir, activity, struggle, and change, and Ewald has given us a picture of the whole, which for accuracy and completeness has no parallel. From his opinions on questions of the deepest interest to us in connection with Scripture we of course dissent, and in this we are in agreement with almost all scholars. It could hardly be otherwise considering the absolute self-reliance of Ewald, and the extent to which he allowed his decision on evidence to be affected by subjective, quite as much as by objective, considerations. We have always felt that the same exception may be taken to a very large number of the verdicts pronounced by the higher criticism. It continually applies tests which continually vary according to the special tendencies of individual critics, and treats their conclusions as though they were of absolute authority. Yet there are scholars entitled to an opinion, who object both to the authority of the tests, and to the mode in which they are applied. Especially, however, is this the case with Ewald. There were few, if any, scholars who could approach him in strength of intellect and vastness of resource. But he was as wayward as he was learned, and as dogmatic as he was wayward. Of course the extravagance, or perhaps we should rather say the eccentricity, of his judgments on the age or canonical authority of various books of Scripture must very seriously affect the estimate which many will form of his work. But it would be a matter for extreme regret if any feeling of this kind

should prevent the full appreciation of the eminent service which he has rendered to sacred literature. We know not where it would be possible to find so full and exhaustive an examination of the entire story of the Jewish people as is contained in this noble work. In the massiveness of its learning it is perhaps unequalled. But Ewald not only had great resources; he knew how to use them. He had what is too often wanting in scholars of his high order—great faculties both of arrangement and exposition. His eye sweeps the entire field of historic inquiry; and his pen is able to present the result of his observation in a clear and interesting style. There is a glow of life and feeling about the narrative which adds immensely to its attractiveness. Ewald is no dryasdust dealing with the old Jewish records as a geologist might handle a fossil. It is of immense advantage to him that he has not taken up the subject as an outsider. He has not so much taken hold of his subject as his subject has taken hold of him, and filled him with an enthusiasm which gives a new element of attraction to his work. It is necessary to say, however, that in order to a full appreciation of its excellence and interest, the reader must have some sympathy with that enthusiasm. The book is pre-eminently a book for students who wish to get below the surface, and while they alone are likely to give to it the close attention which it demands and deserves, it may be hoped that they will be able to read it with the necessary caution which, while showing due respect to Ewald's great name, refuses absolute submission to dogmatic verdicts which are accepted by no great school of criticism. One of the special charms of the present volume is that it deals with a period which is so full of interest and yet so little known. The death of the Jewish nation at the very time, and the rising from its tomb of that new and mighty spiritual force which is to bring the world under the dominion of that Jew whom His nation despised and rejected is, apart altogether from its religious significance, one of the most striking and impressive spectacles in the history of the world.

The Life of John Wesley. By JOHN TELFORD, B.A. (Hodder and Stoughton.) Mr. Telford very truly says that "Wesley's life will never cease to fascinate all readers as it fascinated Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He belongs to the universal Church. One community bears his name; all churches have caught his spirit." It would not be unreasonable, however, to suppose that the story of his life has been so often told, and told by those who have studied it from such varied standpoints, and with such diverse feelings, that there was hardly room for any new biography. The life has been written by admiring friends, who could not see a fault; by cold-blooded observers, who had no liking for his enthusiasm, and therefore could not understand his character; by philosophic historians, who have aimed to be judicial, but too often have succeeded only in being unsympathetic; and also by catholic-spirited Christians, who, while they have not failed to acknowledge

faults, have honoured the nobility of the man and appreciated the grandeur of his work. Still it can hardly be said that we have a complete popular biography of Wesley which does him full justice. It is this desideratum which Mr. Telford has supplied. His task was not an easy one, since he had to give freshness to a theme which might seem to have been tolerably well exhausted. But he has certainly achieved a very distinct success. No man could do a work of this kind to whom Wesley was not a hero. There were innumerable oddities and weaknesses about him of which the records may be found in his journals and letters, and it is quite possible that any one who has not formed a just conception of the spiritual greatness of the man, and of the wonderful influence which he exerted on the nation, might allow these defects so to impress him as altogether to pervert his views of the chief agent in the great Religious Revival. To one who appreciated the work itself such a mistake could hardly be possible. Even Mr. Lecky is certainly not a partial judge, and yet even he reckons the religious revolution which was the result of the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield, as the most important event in the reign of George II. It is simply impossible that the man who was the central force in this great movement could have been a mere vulgar pretender, or wild and arrogant fanatic. The practical sagacity of the statesman and administrator is quite as conspicuous an element in the founder of Methodism as the acknowledged power of the preacher. As an orator Wesley was as much inferior to Whitefield as Whitefield was to him in the organizing faculty, which, when found in its highest degree, is one of the surest evidences of intellectual breadth and force. That Wesley was wayward, imperious, and arbitrary must be admitted. But these are to a large extent the defects of the high qualities without which he could not have been the mighty power that he was. His relations to his wife have of course afforded subject of endless ridicule to those whose delight is to lower the reputation of a great man in the hope that they may thus lessen the distance which separates them from him. The more we know of his private life, however, the more do we feel the sadness and pathos of his home relations. For him (says our author) there was no happy home as for his brother. But if he had married Grace Murray, Miss Wedgwood's comparison (she describes Charles as of "a richer and softer nature") would not have been possible. Grace Murray would indeed have been a helpmeet for him. For she seems to have been a diligent worker, had a hundred members in her class, met a "band" each day in the week, and beside all this was the nurse of the preachers. But she was not acceptable to Charles Wesley, whose own wife was a lady of position, and who, therefore, could not bear the idea of his brother marrying one who had once been a servant. His interference caused what Wesley describes as the greatest disappointment in his life. What we know of Mrs. Murray does not lead us to regard her with any excessive admiration. But she was certainly more fitted to be a helpmeet of John Wesley, who seems to have been deeply in love

with her, than the woman whom in an evil hour he chose for the companion of his life. Strange to say, she was open to precisely the same objection which Charles Wesley felt in relation to Mrs. Murray, and was, perhaps, as unfit to be the wife of the great evangelist as any woman who could be found in England. One of the lessons to be drawn from the story undoubtedly is that the less a man interferes with the matrimonial affairs of others, even though the other be his own brother, the better for all parties concerned. There is perhaps nothing which has been such a stain upon Wesley's reputation as the matrimonial differences which embittered his life, and in which he, after the manner of men in general, certainly did not play a dignified part, and these might have been spared but for the injudicious interference of Charles. Mr. Telford has so told the story as to present the action of Wesley himself in a much better aspect, and has also adduced other evidence, not the least valuable part of which is the impressive testimony of Alexander Knox, as to the esteem and veneration which his personal bearing was fitted to excite. "So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance." Mr. Telford has certainly done important service in the preparation of this volume. It is in no sense a compilation. The author has of course carefully studied the works of previous biographers. But he has also had access to sources of information not generally available, and has given us some particulars not found in the other lives. He writes in a simple and interesting style.

A Son of Hagar. By T. HALL CAINE. (Chatto and Windus.) There are very few living writers of fiction who can obtain such complete hold of the attention of their readers, and retain it too, so fully as Mr. Hall Caine. The *Shadow of a Crime* was one of the most successful novels of its season, and though opinions may differ as to the merits of his present book as compared with its predecessor, there can be no question as to its remarkable brilliancy and power. The plot is, indeed, somewhat complicated, and some of the incidents touch too closely on the melodramatic; but the reader is not troubled by such objections, as he is carried rapidly on through scenes which are full of excitement, and keep his interest up to the highest point. When he lays down the book, and has leisure to think of the number of startling incidents through which the story has hurried him, he may probably feel that the sensational element has been too predominant. But he will then be in a position better to appreciate some of the higher qualities of the book—the rare beauty of some of its pictures, the attractiveness of some of its characters, the singular pathos of some of its passages, and especially of the touching episode of Mercy Fisher. To ourselves one of its principal charms is found in the sketches of the lake district and the life of its people. It is impossible to spend even a few weeks in the region, as we have done more than once, without being attracted to the dwellers in the region, if only because of their strongly-marked individuality. Of course they are beginning to feel the touch

of the century, but it is surprising how much of their primitive simplicity they retain. Keswick on a market day will supply abundant evidence of this, for if the townspeople have been to some extent affected by their nearer and closer relations with the world outside, this is not the case with the dalesmen and villagers who flock in on these occasions, and whose peculiarities will repay a careful study. Their native shrewdness, which often stands them in good stead when matched against the wiles of those more versed in the ways of the world, their sturdy honesty, their outspoken frankness, impress even the most cursory observer. Mr. Hall Caine understands the region and its people thoroughly, and there is a realism in his sketches of their life which will have a peculiar attraction for readers who feel any of that enthusiasm for the lakes which is pretty sure to be kindled in those who spend any time among their beauties.

History of the Pacific States of North America. By HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT. Vol. XVII. California (Vol. V.) Vol. XXIV. Oregon (Vol. I.) (San Francisco: the History Company Publishers.) It may not be known to all our readers that Mr. Hubert Bancroft, of San Francisco, is engaged in a historical enterprise, which for gigantic magnitude is unique; it will enhance the reputation as it will surely satisfy the passion of his countrymen for the immense. What Niagara is to other waterfalls this is to all other histories. It is a series of separate histories of the Pacific States, published "promiscuous like," but intended, when complete, to stand in classified groups of volumes. The magnitude of the work may be inferred from the fact that each portly octavo volume contains from 700 to 750 pages, and that the volume on Alaska is numbered XXVIII. of the series. How many volumes beyond that figure are contemplated we are not told. To his own state, California, Mr. Bancroft devotes five volumes, the fifth bringing down the history to 1848; another will be necessary to bring it to the present. Making more than 4000 pages! or one-third more than Gibbon gives to his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Although Mr. Bancroft intimates that the romantic history of California is somewhat disproportionate in magnitude, it may serve to indicate the scale of the whole work; and the account that Mr. Bancroft gives of his sources of information, and of the manipulation of these, will indicate its character. He gives us first a list, filling sixty-four pages, of four thousand authorities quoted; and he intimates that there are about a thousand more actually consulted. "Never," he says, "has it been the fortune of any writer aspiring to record the annals of his country, to have at the same time so new a field and so complete a collection of original and unused material. I have copied the public archives, hitherto but very superficially consulted; and I have ransacked the country for additional *hundreds of thousands* of original documents, whose very existence was unknown. I have also taken statements varying in size from six to two hundred

pages each, from many hundreds of the early inhabitants." Of these he gives an account. He further says, "My corps of involuntary legal assistants has been more numerous than that of the twenty skilled *collaborateurs*, employed directly by me;" and they "laboured for more than twenty years." He speaks also of "making proper use of other *tens of thousands*" (of papers). These amazing statements suggest many reflections on the making of history. Remembering the estimate that Macaulay put upon street-ballads and broadsides, we are not prepared to say that any of these documents is superfluous; but for a little and modern state like California, surely the supplemental "tens of thousands," following upon "hundreds of thousands," is an amazing number. We must say, however, that the result surprises us by its orderliness of arrangement and excellency of style. It is a mystery to us. On the supposition that it was all collected and arranged for the editor, the mere transcription of such a vast amount of material, with due regard to accurate and lucid composition, were the labour of a life-time. But, whatever the process, the result is a series of well-written, instructive, and interesting volumes, containing a rich and almost exhaustive collection of materials for the use of all future historians. The statements and views of the author cannot by us be subjected to critical tests; we can only record the impression which the volumes make of industry, care, and literary skill, the somewhat big way of writing that we have quoted notwithstanding. The work is a great collection of historical materials and narratives.

The volume on Oregon, which was settled only in 1834, is almost wholly contemporary history. Mr. Bancroft is justly severe on the cruel treatment by Anglo-Saxons of aborigines in the American States, and contrasts it unfavourably with their earlier treatment by the Spaniards. The progress of the Oregon settlement—socially, commercially, and religiously—is carefully traced. And, as in the other volumes, without any pretence of brilliancy, the author's style is picturesque and lucid, and his judgments are studiously fair. He is careful in his use of facts, he spares no pains in verifying them, and he has great power in appraising them, grouping them, and assigning to them their relative value. The homogeneity of the work in style and treatment is really surprising. Mr. Bancroft must have something like genius in his literary manipulation. Wherever we read we are interested.

Mr. Fisher Unwin has just published what seems to us to be a really great work on modern Hinduism. It is from the pen of Rev. W. J. Wilkins, one of a band of able and thoughtful men whom the London Missionary Society has in its service. The book is the result of years of reading, observation, and experience, and is a most valuable contribution to historical and ethnological as well as to missionary literature. From the same publisher we have just received the new volume in his popular and useful series of "The Story of the Nations." The subject of the present volume is *Alexander's Empire*, by Rev. P. J. MAHAFFY. Both of these books will receive fuller notice afterwards.

